THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

March 2008
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PlayStation 3 | PlayStation 2

EXCLUSIVE!

Grand Theft Auto IV

Intoxicating hands-on verdict

15

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PSM3 Start

"We're the only PS3 mag to play *GTAIV*. Fact"

"One of the saddest things about wading through some magazines' 'exclusive' or 'real' verdicts on *GTAIV* is that many have barely seen the game running, let alone played it. So you'll excuse us for introducing our exclusive hands-on with *GTAIV* as just that – a few hours let loose in the most exciting game of '08, that you can't read anywhere else. And, yes, everything is true, even the bit on the Faggio scooter. Would you have believed us three years ago if we claimed *GTA: SA* let you fly on a jetpack while shooting gangsters with uzis? Of course not – but *GTA*'s genius lies in making random events feel like scripted collusions of fate. As for mags claiming disc files and *pages* are 'free gifts', that's another leap of faith entirely..."

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
A few thrilling hours in Liberty City.
Two broken *Saints Row 2* remote-control helicopters.

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"*GTAIV* might just be as good as, if not better than, everyone hopes"
Exclusive **Grand Theft Auto IV** hands-on – page 22

"Sound design has always been vital"
Why **sound in games** is important – page 56

"It was released over a year ago on 360, but it looks *worse* on PS3"
But **Lost Planet's** disappointments don't stop there – page 64

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The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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A massive 12-page hands-on with the game the world is clamouring to play. Dive in now.

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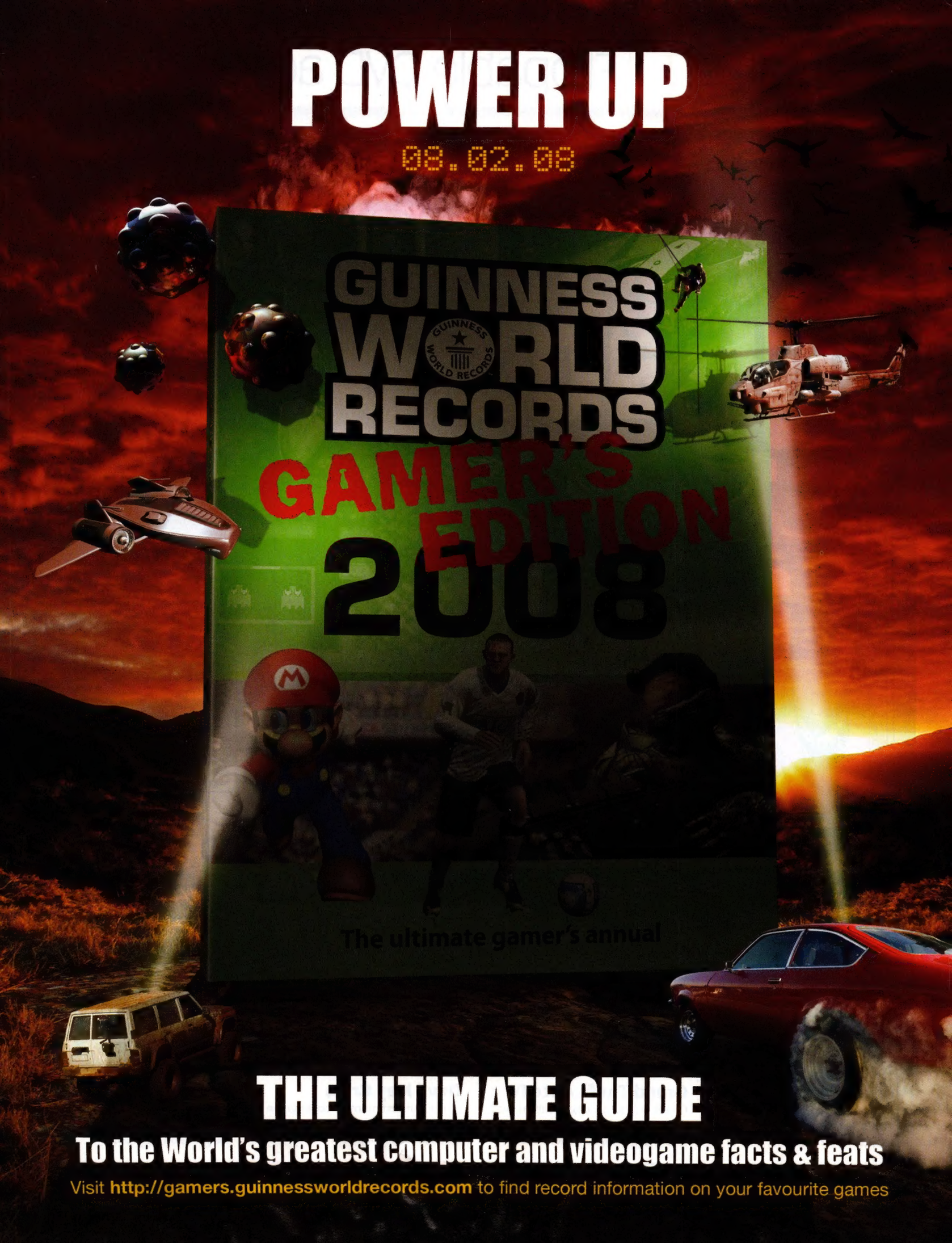
POWER UP
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DVD Highlights New PS3, PS2 and PSP videos

SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3

Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar. Select the disc and press △. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

Step two
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails – click ⊗ to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

recycle

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Throwing away old or surplus discs?
If you would like your CDs and DVDs to be recycled rather than put into landfill, please post them to:
Polymer-Reprocessors,
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Please respect the environment and dispose of waste plastic responsibly.

PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE All-new footage of all the biggest PS3 games, including *Conflict: Denied Ops*, *Lost Planet*, *Iron Man* and loads of others – and listen out for our no-holds-barred audio reviews as well.

Prototype
Anticipation is building for Acti-Blizzard's new slaughter-'em-up. See it in action right now.

Grand Theft Auto IV
Check out our 12-page feature over on page 22, and then watch (nearly) every single *GTAIV* trailer so far.

+ NFL Tour | **LittleBigPlanet** | Yakuza 3 | **Dark Sector** | Borderlands | **More**

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Want to see games in true Hi-Definition? Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – include *Alone In The Dark*, *GTAIV*, *Rainbow Six Vegas 2* and loads more. Don't miss out.

Devil May Cry 4
Check out last month's cover game – and one of PS3's best-lookers – in bee-yootiful hi-def.

PS3 Game Themes
To get loads of PS3 themes, wallpapers and game saves see our full guide on page 16.

+ Disgaea 3 | **GT5 Prologue** | Turok | **TNA Impact** | Burnout Paradise | **More**

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Frontline

Hard news, all P

PS3 REPORT

PS3 and PSP – what the future holds

Top analysts predict death of UMD, touch screen PSP, more...

Last month's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas saw a blitz of major PS3 and PSP announcements. PS3's much-heralded TV tuner is almost ready to rock (see page 20) and PSP owners will soon be making Skype calls with their handhelds. In the wake of the news blitz of CES, PSM3 decided to quiz a bunch of developers, publishers and industry analysts about the future of PS3.

David Amor, Creative Director of *Buzz!* developers, Relentless, is happy to see Sony paying a lot of attention to web convergence. "I like the fact that not only do I get to use the new TV Tuner as a PVR but I can also use my PSP to stream video from it wherever I am in the world. That's a pretty cool feature and an indicator of the direction they're heading."

We can only agree. Though there are still developers who don't, such as GameTao's Dan Boutros. "Seems like Sony is now trying to bolt on as much accessory tech as possible to see if one of them creates a new market," he opines. "I don't think it will. TV Tuner? TV is dying. GPS? Great for game potential and travel navigation but did it help Gizmondo? And would the battery life last a trip from L.A to Vegas? Probably not."

Retails of woe

Analyst Nick Gibson is a little more sanguine about Sony's plans for the future, noting that, "Sony would love to move to the online delivery of games as soon as it possibly can." There is a key sticking point here though – retail. "Sony is entirely reliant on retail for the sale of its hardware and these same retailers are almost entirely reliant themselves on software sales to stay in business. Any transition to digital delivery [which currently represents less than 0.5% of global games sales] would have to be undertaken gradually and would invariably necessitate drastic and disruptive changes at retail."

In addition to the improvements of the 'digital media hub' capabilities of the PS3, let's not forget that 2008 is clearly going to be a great year for gaming. According to analyst, Ed Barton: "PS3 games will more than double in value this year to ensure PS3 is the leading platform for games publishers in the UK in 2008."

And while 'full' digital distribution may still be some years off, Barton is also adamant that, "none can match Sony for an environment to distribute 'full' or 'core', graphically intensive titles such as *Warhawk* or *GT Prologue*, alongside smaller scale, more casual releases such as *Piyotama, Everyday Shooter* and *Super Stardust HD*."

UMD R.I.P?

Future Blu-ray discs will include lower-res versions of films to stream to PSP. Is this the end of UMD? "This is the strongest nod yet to a PSP without a physical drive," says Mad Catz's Alex Verrey. But he continues, "Releasing a PSP without UMD would split the user base." It looks like we'll have to wait and see. Final thought goes to Dave Perry of www.game-consultants.com. "The UMD Drive? It's useless in a digital world." Say what you think, eh?

ON THE DISC
See the latest hi-def game trailers on the disc
Side B

Future shocks Streaming TV recorded on your PS3 (see page 20) to your PSP is just one exciting new development.

"Given PS3's compatibility with DLNA protocols, the combination of a PS3, wireless router, PC, media server application (such as TVersity) and digital media collection offers you a domestic home entertainment network whose capabilities would have been inconceivable even a decade ago," Barton adds.

As for the future of PSP, Perry adds: "Hopefully Sony won't make us wait until PSP4 before they embrace the Xbox Live model (including releasing programming SDK's to the public – like Microsoft's XNA Express Initiative) for it. It's obviously working, so they don't need to even get creative here, just be the first in the handheld gaming space to pull this off. Or wait for Microsoft to beat them to it." Let's hope they don't...

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony | **ETA** TBC

Views: Major players on Sony's future

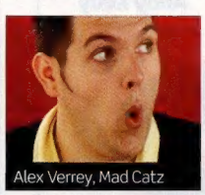
Five of the industry's top spokesmen on what Sony should do next

Dave Perry, industry vet

"I'm on record for my comments on the PSP. They are finally starting to come true, then I start to hear about TV tuners and I fall off my chair again. If anyone puts a TV tuner into a PSP, please fire them Sony. Guys, this is 2008, we don't need tuners any more, we can stream, store, share... everything."

Chris Kohler, Wired

"PSP in its current form won't get any more major operations, like the excising of UMD that people seem to be in a tizzy predicting. That can't happen. What Sony needs to do now is ride it out until their next portable machine and try for a restart. Maybe add a touch-screen, which I hear the kids like these days."



Alex Verrey, Mad Catz

"My guess is that a new PSP will hit next year and we might hear confirmation by Christmas this year. On-board storage, touch and motion sensing, email and message capabilities, a built in camera and GPS along with the strong possibility of an integrated phone are said to be in the works. We'll see."

David Braben, Frontier

"The last few months has seen PS3 come of age, in terms of the games available, and with PlayStation 3 and PSP interlinking. Being able to set the PS3 to record a program remotely is a great feature, but for me it is most interesting if and when this functionality is applied to gaming."

David Amor, Relentless

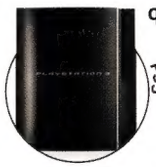
"If you compare the catalogue of Network games against Xbox Live or [Wii's] Virtual Console it's clear to me that Sony are implementing a strict door policy. I don't think it's perfect, but there seems to be a strategy behind it which would migrate pretty well to a world without physical media."

ON THE DISC
Viking is on the disc this issue
Side B

The Opinionator*

"High definition? It's not that great. Not yet"

Even the most beautiful woman in the world would look crap if you shone a big spotlight in her face, and that's exactly what HD does to games. The bigger the resolution, the worse a game looks. When an image is stretched to 37 inches, you can see every seam, every crack and every pixel in unflattering detail. You can see exactly where the developers have pieced together the level. It makes games look like games, not another exciting, adventure-fillled universe entirely.



You say you want a resolution

I'm not mental. I know that HD makes text and images delightfully sharp. I just think we've adopted the technology too early, which is the result of our hyperactive culture's constant need to be on the forefront of new technology. Visuals just aren't advanced enough to stand up to the full hi-def treatment, with the exception of the likes of *Call Of Duty 4*, which looks good because it was made by the most talented games developers in the world. Honestly, play *Drake's Fortune* through a high-quality RGB SCART cable on an expensive CRT television and it looks *better*. There's a kind of natural anti-aliasing, and even the frame-rate's superior because it's not struggling to keep constantly smooth in a demanding resolution. Try it.

Telly addicts

We're at the birth of HD and it's yet to prove itself as truly essential. Even HD telly is a touch too cold, jagged and clinical. But it's getting better, and as devs push PS3 games will start to look the berries in HD. But now, it's something devs feel obliged to include rather than something their games truly benefit from. We're not quite HD ready, even if our tellies are. **Andy Kelly**

* The views of The Opinionator are not echoed by all of PSM3

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS? You can't access the Japanese PSN store from a UK PS3

THE TRUTH Yes you can. You're probably not supposed to, and it might be illegal – *might* be – but here's how you do it. Go to register a PSN account as usual, but set your location to Japan. Then follow these instructions (http://tinyurl.com/2ewfzr) to get past the confusing mass of kanji lettering. And that's it – you're in. You can't enter any billing information so you can't buy anything, but there's loads of free stuff on there you can't get over here yet, including, brilliantly, *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue*. It also means that you can play import games online with Japanese people, but if you don't speak the language there's not much point. You can do the same with a US account too, although it's rare there's anything on their store that we don't have.

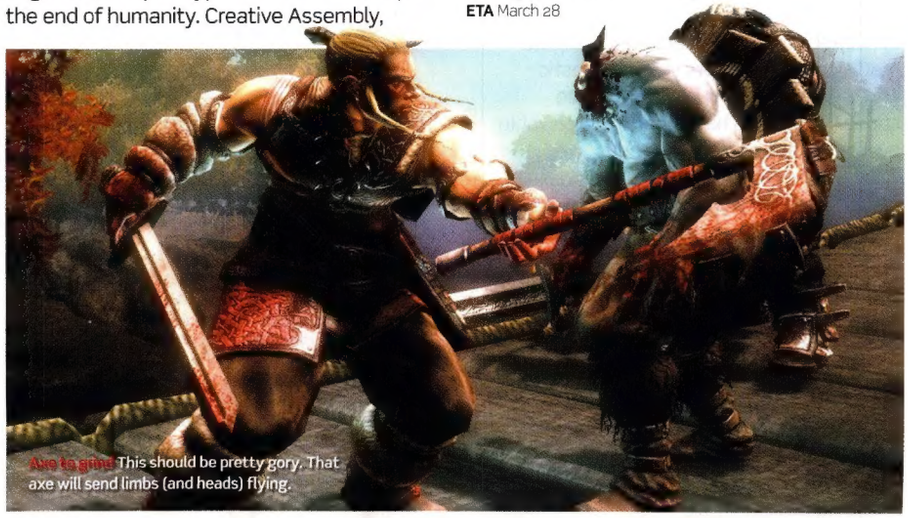
"There are hundreds of characters on-screen at once"
Thrill List
The latest news on PlayStation's hottest games, every issue

1 Viking: Battle for Asgard

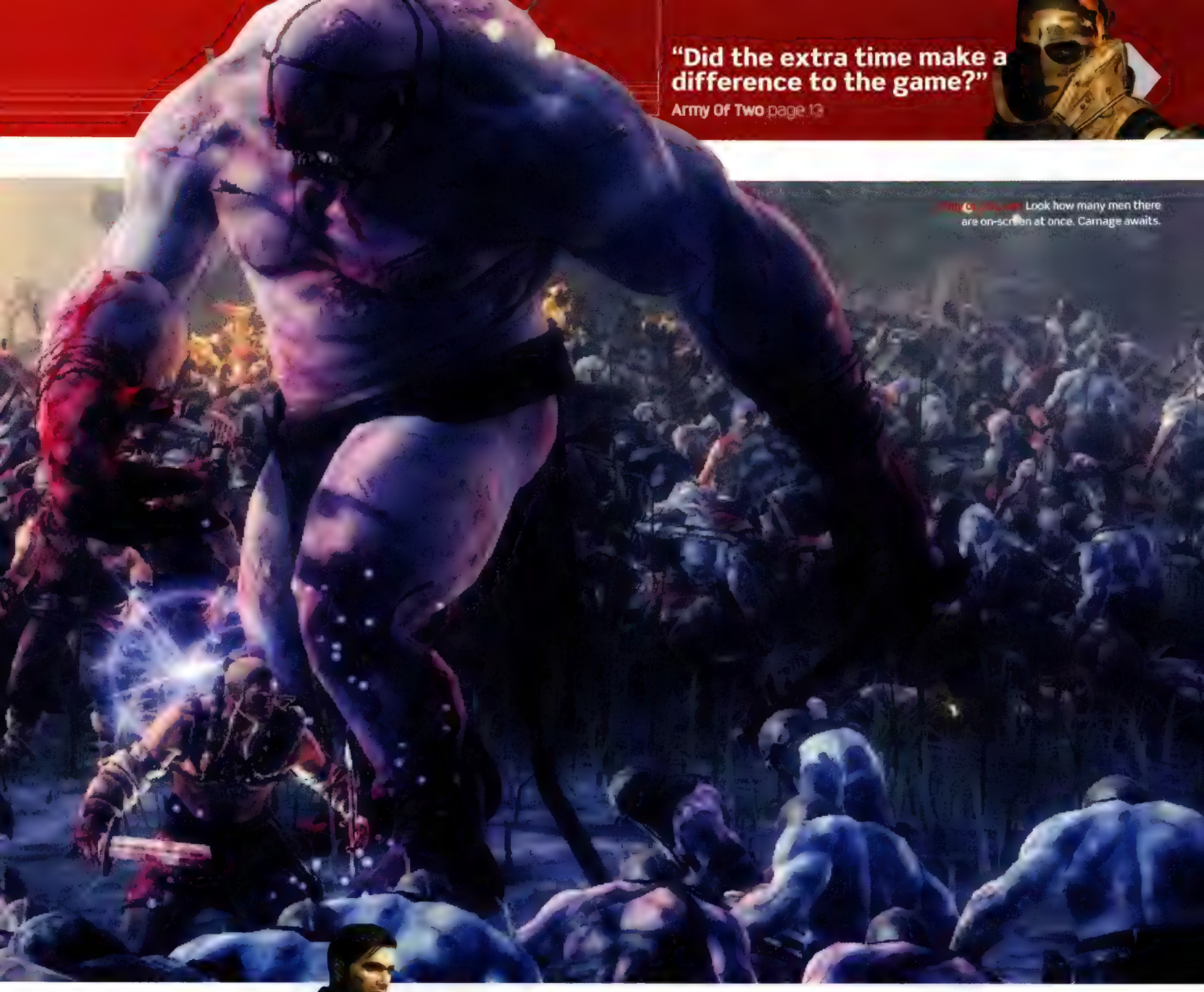
Mythical brawling on an epic scale

Although based on Norse Mythology, this is anything but a boring old historical simulation. Think Lord Of The Rings with Vikings as you, a burly warrior called Skarin, fight to prevent Ragnarok, an apocalyptic war that could spell the end of humanity. Creative Assembly, famed for the epic *Total War* series, have excelled themselves with PS3's hardware and there are literally hundreds of characters on screen at once, brawling with one another and fighting fire-spewing mythical beasts. We'll have the exclusive review of this next month.

Pub Sega | **Dev** Creative Assembly
ETA March 28

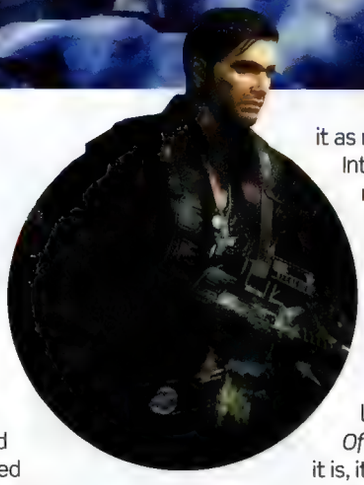

Axe to grind This should be pretty gory. That axe will send limbs (and heads) flying.

"Did the extra time make a difference to the game?"
Army Of Two page 13



Army Of Two Look how many men there are on-screen at once. Carnage awaits.

2 Just Cause 2
Rico's back



Action-packed, free-roaming revolt-'em-up *Just Cause* was flawed, but its sequel hopes to tighten things up. The new setting is more varied, with snow-capped mountains as well as jungles, and side-quests have been ditched in favour of a more focused story mode. If anything, it'll look absolutely stunning in HD.

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Avalanche | **ETA** 2008

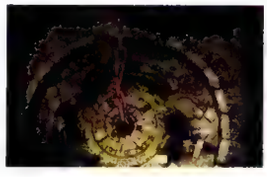
3 New Team Ico project
Image of first next-gen title

Sony's monstrously talented Team Ico are advertising online for new staff members. Not so exciting, but a closer inspection of the recruitment page shows a small image of what appears to be their next game. It's fairly ambiguous – a chain hanging down a well – but rather than immediately dismiss it as rubbish like the entire Internet, a closer inspection reveals a beautiful, hyper-detailed graphics engine and a return to familiar themes of crumbling, ancient buildings. Will it be a direct sequel to *Ico* (our bet) or an entirely original but spiritually linked game like *Shadow Of The Colossus*? Whatever it is, it's surely going to be an awe-inspiring spectacle.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Team Ico | **ETA** 2009

4 inFAMOUS
Sly devs ditch the raccoon

This free-roaming action game lets you use your incredible superpowers for good or evil. So if you fancy tearing up the streets and tossing cars about, you can. But if you're a gentle soul and want to help people, you can do that too. We'll be being as evil as possible, obviously, but it's nice to have the choice. The *Sly* games are excellent and their intuitive platforming seems to have been carried over to this, but with a darker tone and a more realistic setting. A sleeper hit? Maybe.



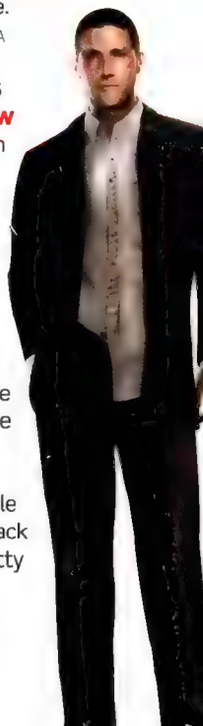
Ico 3, *Lost*, *inFAMOUS* **The '*Ico 3*' shot doesn't show much, but says a lot. *Lost* looks better than it did.**

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sucker Punch | **ETA** TBA

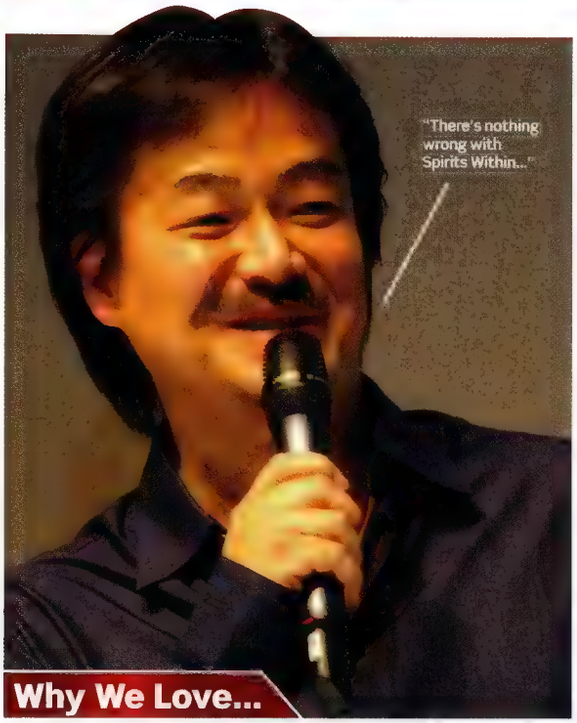
5 Lost: Via Domus
Looking better now

Playing out like a mini-season of the show, the *Lost* game will be split into seven 'episodes', all planned and approved by series producers and writers Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof. You'll be able to visit famous locations from the programme, including The Black Rock, the caves and the Swan Station. Most of the principal cast are on voice duties, although a few notable ones are missing, including Jack and Kate. Still, should be pretty faithful to the TV series.

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubi | **ETA** February 26



ON THE DISC
The games in this column will all be on future discs



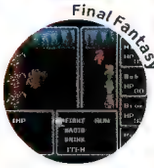
Why We Love...

Hironobu Sakaguchi

The man who revolutionised role-players in the West

What has he done?

Without Sakaguchi-san, there'd be no *Final Fantasy*. No chocobos, no Cid, no airships, no thousands upon thousands of hours of beautiful role-playing. He made his first game in 1987, a simplistic NES driving game called *Rad Racer*, but later that year he designed the first *Final Fantasy* and it stunned the world with its deep story and accessible gameplay. distinctive Japanese design style. He also took his love of storytelling to the silver screen, directing ill-fated CG movie FF: The Spirits Within.



What's he doing now?

Sakaguchi-san has abandoned Square Enix to work on his own projects. After working on over 60 Square games including, *Kingdom Hearts* and *Vagrant Story*, he's now working on original games including Xbox 360 role-player *Lost Odyssey*. Here's hoping he comes back to PlayStation very soon.

Why we like him?

Because he revolutionised the way we play RPGs. Before *Final Fantasy* it was all goblins, axes, beards and tomes of impenetrable stats. But now, suddenly, they were accessible, and had unique stories and a

Who are you?
Name Hironobu Sakaguchi
Role Director
Key Games *Final Fantasy, Kingdom Hearts, Vagrant Story, Parasite Eve, Xenogears*

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Good news for fans of **Uncharted**, according to Naughty Dog president Christophe Balestra, a sequel is in production. Expect it to emerge from the shadows in 2009. In other, less exciting, sequel news, **Kane & Lynch 2** is on the way.

Elsewhere, EA are apparently working on a **GI Joe** game. If it'll be released in the UK remains to be seen. Joe's a household name in the States, but not here. More sequels? OK, a new **Prince Of Persia** game, tentatively titled *Ghosts Of The Past*, is on its way. Leaked concept art suggests it'll be similar in tone to the darker games in the series.

Now, if you remember NanaOn-Sha's excellent music-based puzzler **Vib Ribbon**, you'll know that it was one of PSone's best games - and now it's coming to the PSN in download form. The game let you use your own music CDs to create levels. Speaking of music, if you like **Rock Band** but don't agree with the song choices, here's a rumour you'll like; apparently Harmonix are working on new software that reads data off a music CD and creates a playable 'level' from it

"There's a *Drake's Fortune* sequel in production"

And in other news, apparently a PS3 version of hit Xbox 360 FPS **BioShock** was near completion, but held back because of a Microsoft exclusivity deal. The game may never see the light of day, but there's a chance it might as it actually *exists*.

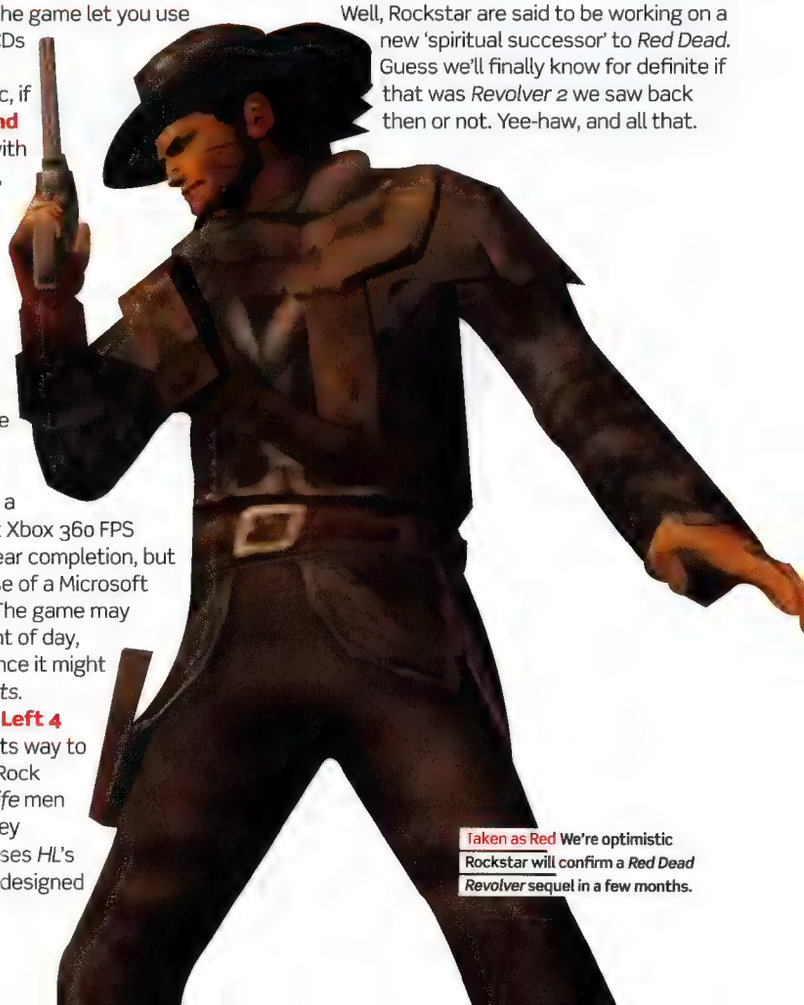
Online shooter **Left 4 Dead** may be on its way to PS3. Devs Turtle Rock impressed *Half-Life* men Valve so much they bought them. It uses *HL*'s Source engine, is designed for online co-op, and lets you play as survivors of a zombie outbreak or as the zombies.

More zombie news: at the end of the newest **Resi 5** trailer we see part of a mystery female's face. Rumour has it that this is Sherry Birkin, the briefly-playable little girl from *Resi 2* on PSone. Sticking with Capcom, next year, keep your eyes peeled for the arrival of **Onimusha 5** on PS3. There's no plot details yet, mind. And Grasshopper, the eccentric madmen behind **Killer7**, are creating a new game for PS3. Nothing is known about it yet

There's also a rumour floating around that a new **Wing Commander** game is being made. Remember that? The space adventure starring Mark Hamill? And there's another space-based game coming out, courtesy of EA, although its name is unknown. But no, I'm not talking about *Dead Space*, before you start writing letters.

And, finally, remember that brief trailer at E3 2005 from Rockstar that looked at lot like a sequel to cowboy-'em-up **Red Dead Revolver**, but was never officially confirmed as such?

Well, Rockstar are said to be working on a new 'spiritual successor' to *Red Dead*. Guess we'll finally know for definite if that was *Revolver 2* we saw back then or not. Yee-haw, and all that.



Taken as Red We're optimistic Rockstar will confirm a *Red Dead Revolver* sequel in a few months.

"CoD4 literally rendered other FPSs redunant"
The reader awards page 14

PS3 REPORT

The Army Of Two you'll NEVER play

Dev reveals game changes and the reason behind the delay

After months of delays, *Army Of Two* is finally primed for release. We reviewed 'final' (so we were told) code in PSM94 – only for EA to delay the game within hours of our deadline. In a recent one-on-one with developer Matt Turner, he told us about how the game has been changed, tightened up and generally tweaked, based on what we'd said in our review and focus group feedback.

"The EA execs weren't happy and gave us extra time to refine the game" explains Matt. "We had two months extra to work on it, which is a pretty big chunk of time in development terms." We'll be reviewing the 'updated' version of *Army Of Two* next issue. Let's see if the extra time made a difference.

Dev Matt Turner talked us through the changes

Updates The bits you'll never play

The key differences in the revised *Army Of Two*

Vehicle sections

Yep, they're gone. You'll never have to endure the frustrating buggy section in the first level. The hovercraft bit's still in there, but that was playable enough. The vehicle action was removed so EA could focus on the shooting.

Enemy AI

They say it's a lot sharper. In the original version they were fairly smart, but not smart enough. But that's all changed, and enemies will work together to take you down. Good AI can make or break a shooter, and we're glad it's improved.

Minigames

These included healing your partner and using CPR to keep them from dying. They've been scrapped because they didn't "keep the player in the experience." We agree – shoving tampons in bullet holes ruined the pace.

Improved combat

The weapons are beefier, with more pad rumble, twinned to more dramatic death animations. They felt slightly underpowered before. This also means that the game feels more manly and visceral. A small change, but important.

ON THE DISC
Some games on the disc may prove to be the best of 2008

PS3 REPORT

The PSM3 reader awards – the results

We asked, you voted – and here's your best of 2007

Hearing the call it's *CoD4* – yours, ours, pretty much *everybody's* game of the year.

PS3 game of the year

1 Call Of Duty 4 (PSM95, 94%)
Hardly a surprise – the title that rendered other FPSs redundant with its tight design and compulsive play is your game of the year, and ours. Infinity Ward, we salute you.

2 Uncharted (PSM96, 89%)
Arguably, the best-looking next-gen game on any console. A shade repetitive, but solid, polished and neatly plotted.

3 Ratchet & Clank (PSM93, 93%)
A fizzy, candy-coloured rollercoaster of a game. Lacks startling innovation, but actually funny, and divinely-paced.

PS2 game of the year

1 God Of War 2 (PSM86, 93%)
The runaway winner, Kratos's sequel could've passed for a PS3 game – easily topping next-gen imitators like *Genji* and *Conan*.

2 Okami (PSM84, 95%)
A mass-market flop – unsurprising, for a game featuring a cartoon wolf wandering around ancient Japan with a paintbrush – but magnificent all the same.

3 Final Fantasy XII (PSM82, 94%)
Utterly beguiling, the only problem *FFXII* had was being overshadowed by PS3's UK launch a couple of months earlier. Tremendous, however.

PSP game of the year

1 MGS: Portable Ops (PSM83, 84%)
In fact, everyone went for *GTA: Vice City Stories*. Except that game came out in *2006* (although the PS2 version appeared in 2007) so we had to discount *every* vote for it. Koj's mind-bending strategy tour de force is the beneficiary of said collective madness. Better than its sequel, too.

2 Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters (PSM87, 86%)
Another terrific *Ratchet* game, perhaps a tad overlooked due to its handheld-exclusivity – but a technical joy. We'd put money on a PS2 port turning up in 2008.

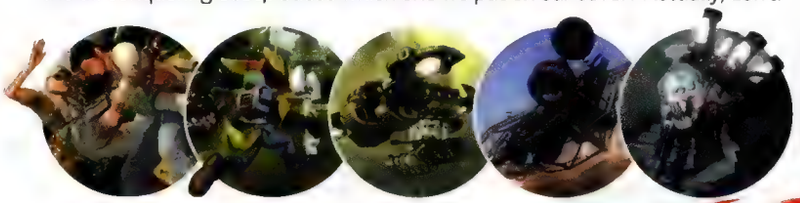
3 Silent Hill Origins (PSM95, 82%)
Probably better than we expected, this portable horror tale of a man separated from his beloved truck (OK, there was more than that) gripped us from start to finish.

Publisher of the year

1 Sony
Uncharted, Ratchet, Warhawk, MotorStorm, Resistance, SingStar... people moan about Sony, but they released some cracking games in 2007. And *Heavenly Sword* as well.

2 Ubisoft
In off the strength of *Assassin's Creed* and the mammoth-sized *Oblivion*, it's been a pretty decent year for 'the Ubi'. As no-one calls them.

3 Activision
Activision managed to wipe out the memory of *Transformers* thanks to the all-conquering *CoD4*. Guess which one we put on our cover? Actually, don't.

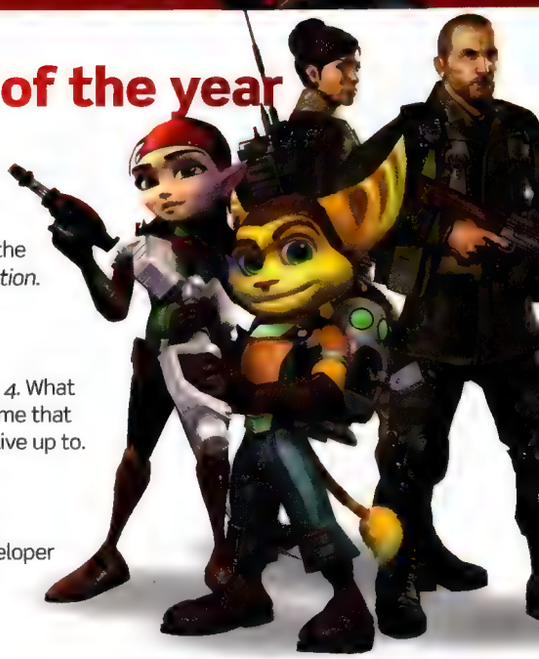


Developer of the year

1 Insomniac
Tasked with creating the terrific *Resistance: Fall Of Man* for the launch line-up, they then surpassed it with the impeccable *Tools Of Destruction*. Kudos, Insomniac.

2 Infinity Ward
They made *Call Of Duty 4*. What more can be said? It's the game that every single FPS now has to live up to.

3 Naughty Dog
Pushed PS3's technical boundaries like no other developer with the gloriously beautiful *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. Truly next generation.



Unsung hero

1 Okami (PSM84, 95%)
The obvious contender for the award, but no less deserved for that. *Oblivion* aside, there are no really strong 20-30 hour adventures on PS3 – so get back to your PS2 and try *Okami* out.

2 Warhawk (PSM87, 90%)
We didn't get a great deal of emails from you all about *Warhawk*, and wondered if it had passed you by – we're glad to see this supreme 32-player aeroplane shooter had an impact after all.

3 Ratchet & Clank (PSM93, 93%)
Excuse us? *Ratchet* continues to perform well in the charts. Unsung? Hardly, but we're happy you love it anyway.

Disappointment of the year

1 Delays
Killzone 2, LittleBigPlanet, Metal Gear, GTAIV, Haze, Blacksite, The Orange Box, Stranglehold, PS3 itself... you name it, we had to wait longer than we expected for it. Of course, we're still waiting in many cases.

2 Kane & Lynch (PSM95, 58%)
We were so looking forward to *Kane & Lynch*'s promising brand of gangsters 'n' guns. It was from *Hitman* devs Io, after all – how could it possibly go wrong? And then we played it, and experienced its maddening shooting, dull gameplay and terrible end sequence. A massive waste of potential.

3 PES 2008 (PSM94, 86%)
You know, we like new *PES* more each time we play – but that's not to say the slowdown isn't as painful as looking at Carlos Tevez's face. And the ball physics are certainly 'interesting' at times. However it's still the best next-gen football game yet – but we demand better in 2008.

Online game of the year

1 Call Of Duty 4 (PSM95, 94%)
We've spent approximately 800 man-hours between us playing this, and the buzz hasn't faded yet. We'll see you on the battlefield, and shoot you right between the eyes. And laugh as we do so.

2 Warhawk (PSM87, 90%)
Call Of Duty's dominance means that we've somewhat neglected *Warhawk*, but the pleasure of blasting a rival out of the skies during a loop-the-loop is still strong.

3 Resistance: Fall Of Man (PSM86, 89%)
Resistance spent the first months of the year as PS3's top online offering. It's been toppled since, but it's still a great online FPS.

Defining moment of 2007

1 PS3 launches
We're amazed we didn't think of this ourselves for our own defining moments in PSM96. It's the UK launch of PS3, the true arrival of next-gen, the ushering in of the future. But if you thought *that* was exciting, 2008 will thrill you to the core.

2 Ghillie Suit level, *CoD4*
As we said in PSM96, simply the most flawlessly-designed, sublimely paced stage in any game we've seen in years. Awesome.

3 MGS4 trailers
Pensioner Snake, Raiden and Vamp scrapping, a monkey... *Metal Gear Solid 4* looks even madder, but even *better*, than ever. We're gagging to play the finished version now.

ON THE DISC
Resistance 2 will be on a disc very soon
PS3/Coming Soon

PS3 ONLINE

How to install PS3 themes...

...from our cover DVD. It's easy.

These instructions are SO SIMPLE there's absolutely no way they wouldn't work. Well, probably. So here we go.

1. Right, using a PC/Mac, you have to make a folder on a USB memory stick called 'PS3'. Then make another folder inside that called 'THEME'. Make sure it's in caps.

2. Access our DVD and find the themes folder. Pick the theme you want (the files end in .pt3) and copy it into the 'THEME' folder.

3. Stick the USB drive into your PS3 and go to 'Themes' in the system menu.

4. Select 'install' and then select 'USB device'.

5. The theme should install. Sometimes they're named incorrectly by the creators and come up as 'SAMPLE', but they will still work. Foolproof. If we get another mail we'll be stunned. Sort of.

Stick man challenge

Can you guess what game this is?

Last month's challenge was too easy. It was, obviously, *Shadow Of The Colossus*. So we've made this one damn-near impossible. <*Er, have we? - Ed*> It's an obscure game and the drawing is rubbish. Well, more rubbish than usual. Can you guess? Here's a clue; you battle blue-coloured aliens in it. Think you know? Mail us.

PS3 REPORT

The return of the chimera

First shots of *Resistance 2* – with 60-player online and eight person co-op

Resistance: Fall Of Man 2 - the sequel to PS3's first great FPS - is leaving the UK and moving to... Iceland. And, mostly, the USA. Once again, the story revolves around human/alien hybrid, Nathan Hale. We last saw him being captured and ushered into a chopper by mysterious troops, and this follow-up sees said transport blown out of the sky somewhere over Iceland.

Nathan somehow blasts his way to the US from there, before being forced to join a group known as the Sentinels; a team of soldiers who have the same alien health regeneration and speed as Nathan. Mind, this time it looks as if he's going to need the help, judging by

"Fancy playing tennis in the Green Hill zone?"
Sega Superstars Tennis page 18

Home base The Chimera are up to their usual invading antics and will storm US airforce bases like this.

Fight finisher Like the giant robots like this?

the size of those colossal robots – which look like huge versions of the crab-like Stalkers from the first game.

Insomniac are trumpeting a whopping 60-player online experience and a co-op mode that will allow up to eight-player squads, in which we presume you'll play as the Sentinels. And with each character rumoured to have a different class, expect to be playing as a medic, heavy weapons expert, a generic grunt and more besides – a bit like *Battlefield*. We'll have to wait and see if it can build on the success of the original, but we're quietly confident. More next issue.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac | **ETA** October

Lots of Detail The incredibly detailed characters look even scarier than before.

ON THE DISC
All these games will appear on future discs

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

PS3 Saboteur *Okami*, the war years

Details Pub TBC | **Dev** Pandemic | **Genre** Action

Lowdown Playing as Sean, an Irish ninja (sort-of), you have to creep through Nazi-occupied France and rid its streets of Krauts. The game uses a unique colour system – if an area is controlled by the Germans it's grey and bleak, and reducing their control makes it return to a lovely autumnal Parisian tint. This is a novel take on the tired old WW2 genre, and it's being developed by Pandemic, of *Mercenaries* and *Full Spectrum Warrior* fame. Should be good.

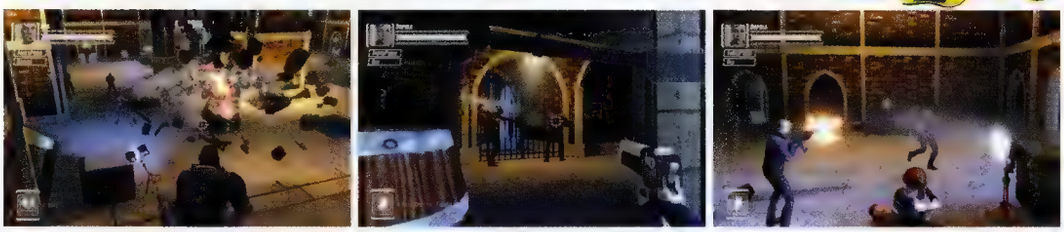
ETA Summer

PSP Boulder Dash Rocks The ancient retro classic, reborn

Details Pub 10tacle | **Dev** 10tacle | **Genre** Puzzle

Lowdown If you remember the original *Boulder Dash* then you're probably 60 years old. This is a new, souped-up version, which, like always, sees you digging through treacherous mazes of skull-crushing rocks to recover diamonds. This kind of thing works well on PSP and we like that the purity of the original gameplay has been retained, but with prettier, more colourful visuals. But is *Boulder Dash* still at all relevant? We'll see.

ETA Summer

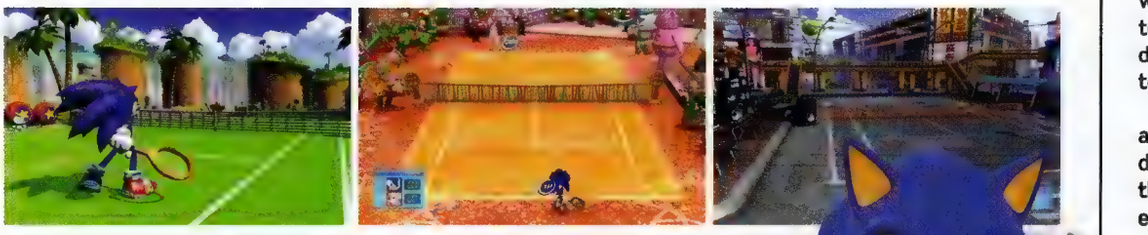


PS3 The Agency An ambitious online spy-'em-up

Details Pub Sony | **Dev** SOE | **Genre** Online

Lowdown "It's 24 meets Alias meets *Counter Strike*," say the developers of this massively multi-player online shooter. It sees you, as an elite operative, fighting against other human-controller agents in huge environments. There are hundreds of gadgets and weapons to use, and you can work in teams (or 'agencies') to infiltrate enemy-controlled buildings. This could be great, and it's PS3's first huge-scale online game. Let's hope it lives up to its ambitious concept.

ETA Autumn



PS3 Sega Superstars Tennis Sega-flavoured arcade tennis

Details Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital | **Genre** Sports

Lowdown If you've ever fancied playing tennis in the *House Of The Dead* mansion or in *Sonic*'s Green Hill Zone, now's your chance. This is a dazzlingly colourful arcade tennis game, but with the added bonus of being full of Sega characters and locations. So, for example, you could play as Aiai from *Super Monkey Ball* against Sonic's nemesis Dr Eggman on an *OutRun* track. Pure fanboy heaven, and a fairly accomplished tennis-'em-up as well. It has online multi-player too. Review next time out.

ETA March 28

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy*

Publishers giving up on games and binning them? Yay!

I heard that THQ cancelled a load of their games because they had no faith in the brands. *Stuntman* has apparently shot its last scene with Ignition, the next PS2 version of *Destroy All Humans* has been tossed aside like a bit of old rubbish and *Frontlines: Fuel Of War* on PS3 has been completely cancelled. Good! Rather than work to make these games decent, they *should* just be indiscriminately cancelled. Sod 'em – they were probably going to be rubbish anyway.

Scrapheap challenge

Other publishers should follow suit. That's how you clean up the charts and leave only mega-sellers like *FIFA* and *Medal Of Honor*. Don't bother with original ideas at all because nobody *wants* unique games. Eventually every shred of originality will be wiped from the face of the Earth and we'll be lined up like robots, collecting top-selling franchises from 'game dispensers', like lab rats pushing a button to get a food pellet. I can't wait.

Whenever developers try and be brave and release off-beat games, like Capcom did with *Okami*, they never sell, even though they're the most important examples of the art form. Like that matters! It's all about currency today. Dollars. Pounds. Bucks. Groats. Clams. Developers should just make games about space marines until the end of time. *Guaranteed* sales.

EMAIL PSM3
Do you care *Frontlines* has been canned?
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

*Views do not necessarily reflect those of PSM3 – in fact, some might argue that binning Frontlines was a good thing, but that's another story...

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES...

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ON THE DISC
We plan to demo PlayTV on a future disc

Nitty gritty | What's the deal?

When? How much? Well, we can tell you...

So, when is PlayTV out and what will it cost? While SCEE is still to make official announcements on both, PSM3 can confidently predict we should see the UK release of the service around Easter, at a cost of about £70. We're not sure about other European territories, however, and we're also feeling slightly smug that our American cousins won't see a similar service for quite some time (if ever) due to their confusing mish-mash of local (old school) analogue and (new-fangled) digital broadcasters. Yay – European gamers get something first for once. About time too.

PSM3 INVESTIGATES

How PS3's PlayTV will ace Sky

First verdict on Sony's £70 (ish) recordable PS3 freeview box

SCEE's new-fangled PlayTV (pictured right) is proof that Sony's long-term strategy involves PS3 becoming a media hub for all your entertainment needs, both at home and on the go; encompassing games, movies, TV, music, internet and more. It is also, PSM3 is glad to report, incredible.

How does it work?

Yep, we've seen the future of telly and it's a small, almost weightless black box that you plug into your PS3 via a USB2 cable. Plug the other end of the magic PlayTV box into a standard RF aerial cable carrying a decent broadcast signal and, well, that's it. Now just sit back, make a nice cup of tea and you can use your Sixaxis or Sony's BD remote control to browse the electronic programme guide (EPG) and receive, record and program free digital TV through your PS3.

You can choose to record in standard or high definition and view the show you're recording or other programmes at the same time. PlayTV also gives you pretty much all the standard functionality of a Personal Video Recorder, so you can watch live TV, pause it while you go for a wee or fast forward it and rewind it.

Unfortunately PlayTV doesn't allow users to record more than one programme at a time, unlike some of the costlier subscription services with which it will inevitably be compared such as Sky+ or Virgin+, but Sony's service has one major advantage over these: PlayTV is free. So unless you watch an inordinate amount of subscription-only sport and/or movies, PlayTV is a far cheaper option for managing and getting the best out of your TV-viewing than Mr Murdoch's or Mr Branson's pricey offerings.

PS Plus The PlayTV box (below right) displays 15 sec thumbnails of everything you record.

Portable television

What's more, it (finally) turns your PSP into a truly indispensable piece of tech, your own on-the-go goggle box. So you can finally use it for something other than playing *Patapon* on the bus to work. Time to stock up on some spare PSP batteries.

Forget arguments about who's watching what any more. Girlfriend wants to watch the news while you want to watch The Simpsons? Simply take your PSP to the bedroom or to a quiet corner of your local pub and watch what you want, when you want. You can also choose to watch anything that you have recorded onto your PS3's hard disc drive via live streaming. So, providing you're in a Wi-Fi zone, you can view your chosen TV shows and movies pretty much anywhere you are in the world.

And all the TV-on-the-go voodoo doesn't end there. You can also use your PSP as a portable electronic programme guide. Which means that you can check up on and alter your PlayTV recording options and preferences via your new magic portable tellybox. So it's kind of like having a digital version of the Radio Times inside your PSP. You need never miss Heroes or South Park ever again.

Low viewing figures?

But, while the PSP streaming and EPG features are indeed the coolest aspects of the service, in reality how many people will actually make full use of them? If you want to watch your TV shows and movies while lazing around on a beach, then you plan ahead and do it on the portable DVD player you bought at the airport, surely? While the service sounds awesome in theory, might PlayTV might turn out to be something that's strictly for Sony fanboys and early adopters, yet lacking a more widespread, mass-market appeal? And while Sky+ is still a luxury for many, most of us already have Freeview and decent VCRs or recordable DVD players.

Yet sony certainly thinks it can crack the market and - if our guesstimate of £70 for PlayTV is about right - we can't wait to see what PS3 owners make of it when it launches later this Spring.

"Finally turns PSP into an indispensable piece of tech"

© NBC Universal

Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar
Players TBC | **Genre** Action
FYI Next-gen *GTA* is almost here

ON THE DISC
See (nearly) every *GTA* trailer ever on One Disc

GTA

The most comprehensive hands-on you can read – and 12 pages that reveal just how good *GTA IV* really is...

We're squeezing the pad and laughing – inside, of course – and desperate to scrawl some notes in case we forget, but right now, *nothing* is more important than jamming B.

As our grip tightens, Niko hits the ramp at a pathetic 20mph, slamming the wire fence and sending our Faggio scooter sprawling. R Kelly's really crooning now, the cops are closing in – as are the angry bikers – and we should be ready to run, but we're just kind of laughing in relief and anticipation, since it's clear that *GTAIV* might just, secretly, be as good – if not better – than everyone hopes.

We'll explain *why* we were being chased later on – it's one of those mad collusions of circumstance that make GTA the phenomenon it is – but the miracle is that we're in this situation at all. Rather than be led by the hand, our exclusive hands-on with *GTAIV* is just that – a few hours let loose in the most exciting, and potentially densest virtual world, of 2008. Almost everything we experienced was unique to us, delightful intersections of fate, control and subtle AI cues, that you can't read about anywhere else in the world. Other folk might have seen *GTAIV*, or harvested a greater pool of facts – though we'll do our best to highlight the key new features – but the bulk of what you'll read over the next few pages is pure 'off mission' experiment. This isn't Rockstar's vision of *Grand Theft Auto IV*, this is ours – and rather than just sample Liberty City's mechanics, we've lived them, just as you will when the game hits the shelves on April 29. Apologies if it

Sprinting press The faster you tap ⊗, the faster Niko runs, and he doesn't seem to get tired.

Serve and protect Your helmet will spill off in major collisions and you can see it on the floor.

Ad enough The background hums with detail – like the America's Next Top Hooker billboards.

sounds like we're making a big deal of this, but let us explain. All will become clear.

A refreshing change

A regular *GTAIV* demo works like this: a Rockstar guy plays through a few well-rehearsed levels – paying particular attention to camera angles to minimize any unsightly pop-up – and reads lines from an approved script, with limited scope for improvisation. The result is that every mag, website, TV channel, newspaper and radio station in the world gets the same stage-managed experience. Rockstar's latest round of *GTAIV* coverage, (that you'll have seen online in late January, or in almost every other mag currently pretending to have 'exclusive' access) covering three new missions including 'Search and Delete', 'Deconstruction For Beginners' and 'Truck Hustle' – worked the same way.

So we expected our hands-on to be just that – three new pre-scripted levels, with the bonus of holding the pad. Part of it was: three new missions you'll be able to read about in select other publications – and below – but the rest is unique. The fact we were allowed to explore the world on our own wasn't just surprising, but thrilling – as we'll do our best to explain.

The first thing that strikes you is how much better *GTAIV* looks than six months ago. It isn't worlds apart, but what you see in the trailers *is* the game – everything's much more solid and the pop-up has been almost eliminated. It isn't flawless, but your gaze is constantly wrestled by the myriad new effects: the speed blur on the freeway, the incredible fine detail on the car hubs, the way Niko's breath steams up in the cold, the blinding 'next-gen' sun flare and depth of field de-focus blur as you move the camera. It isn't quite as beautiful as, say, *Uncharted*'s stage-managed highlights, but it's comparable, and way more impressive given the staggering scale.

Info-blast

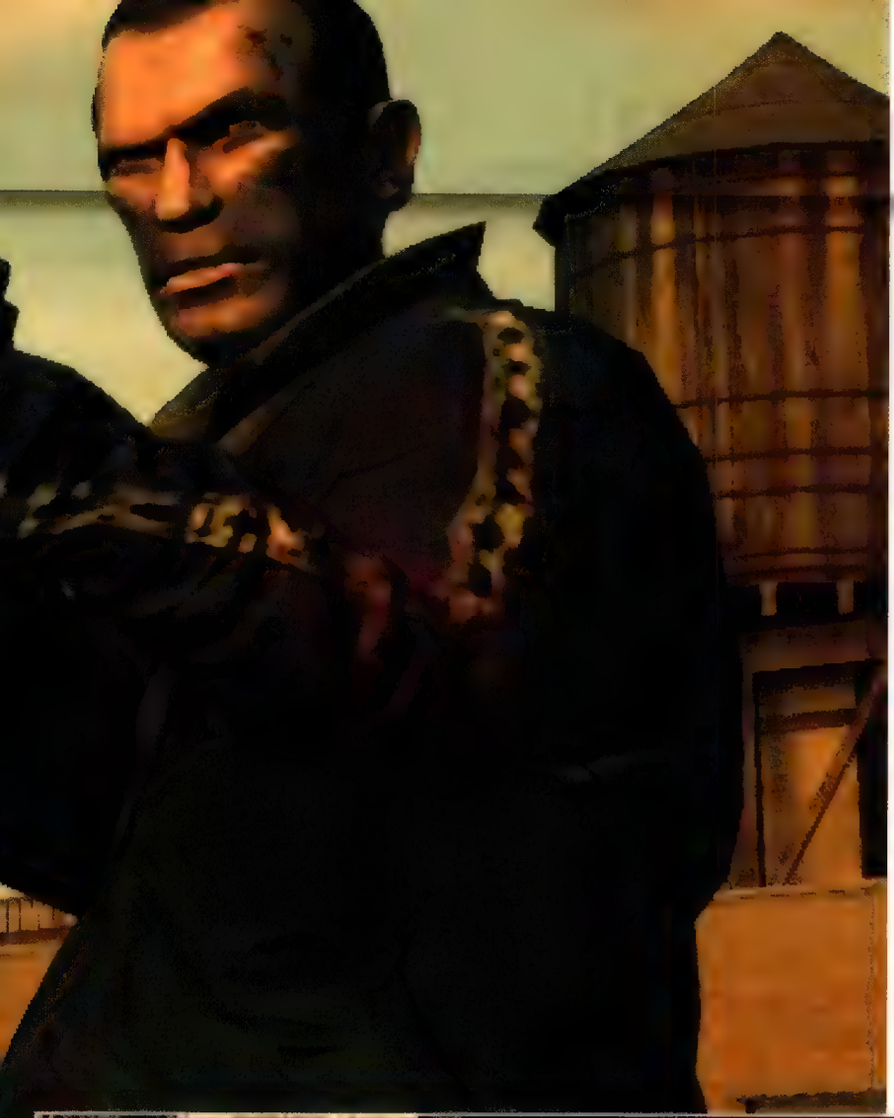
PSM3 digs deeper...

Drunk › Driving

You take Roman boozing as part of a 'friendship' side mission, emerging from Comrades Bar drunk as sailors. In a new, puritan-baiting, mini-game you need to drive Roman home, while the camera blurs, sways and twists, and the controls – as far as we could tell – randomly reverse at intervals. It's honestly funny, and the best in-game recreation of drunkness we've ever seen. It's distorting and difficult, but Roman's drunken boasts are perfectly measured.

Unique moment #1

We're by the quayside in Algonquin, eager to test out the new fighting mechanics (hold ⊗ to block, ◎ to kick, □ for punch and △ for power moves like headbutts), when we spot an angry-looking biker, sporting a bomber jacket and handlebar 'tache. Naturally, we push him (you can



Info-blast

PSM3 digs deeper...

Date › Politics

You don't have to complete your friendship side missions, but – like life – if you're going to pull out, it's best to ring ahead to say you can't make it, or risk lowering your trust level and missing out on goodies.

Police › Radio

Not only can you steal Police cars and access the police database, uploading your mobile phone snaps to identify suspects or performing name searches, you can use your mobile phone to call in false 911s and create a diversion.

Damage control The cars are subject to real world physics with much more realistic damage.

shove through crowds, like in Assassin's Creed, *by pressing ◎), and he recoils, before fronting up. We connect a few punches, before he staggers back and pulls a knife. Rule one: knife beats fist. Rule two: look before you punch. The quayside is full of bikers, and we're surrounded by about ten angry foes. Brave as lions, we run (speed tap ⊗ to sprint – you don't seem to get tired like previous games).*

After pushing through a tunnel, we spot a cop on the main road. "This might be good news," pipes our Rockstar rep – and he's right. The cop points his gun at the biker who's chasing (as far as he knows) an innocent civilian. Without warning – pop, pop – the biker's dead. "Didn't expect that," offers our Rockstar rep, genuinely surprised. Pedestrians scatter and, as we scramble to steal the first available vehicle – just our luck, a crummy Faggio scooter – we accidentally run over another cop. 20 seconds later, we're being chased by three squad cars and *a gang of bikers.*

Fearing the worst, we spot a makeshift ramp that might just carry us over a fence and to safety. As we grip the accelerator, R Kelly's Bump And Grind – you can't make it up – whirrs into life on the R&B radio channel, and the last thing we hear as we hit the ramp is "My mind's telling me yes, but my body, my bo-daaay's, *telling me no," as we splat into the fence at 20mph and marvel at the euphoria physics engine as Niko flops onto a skidding cop car. It's at this moment we understand – GTAIV's genius isn't its raw mechanics, or its missions, but at the point where a set of random events fuse to feel like fate.*

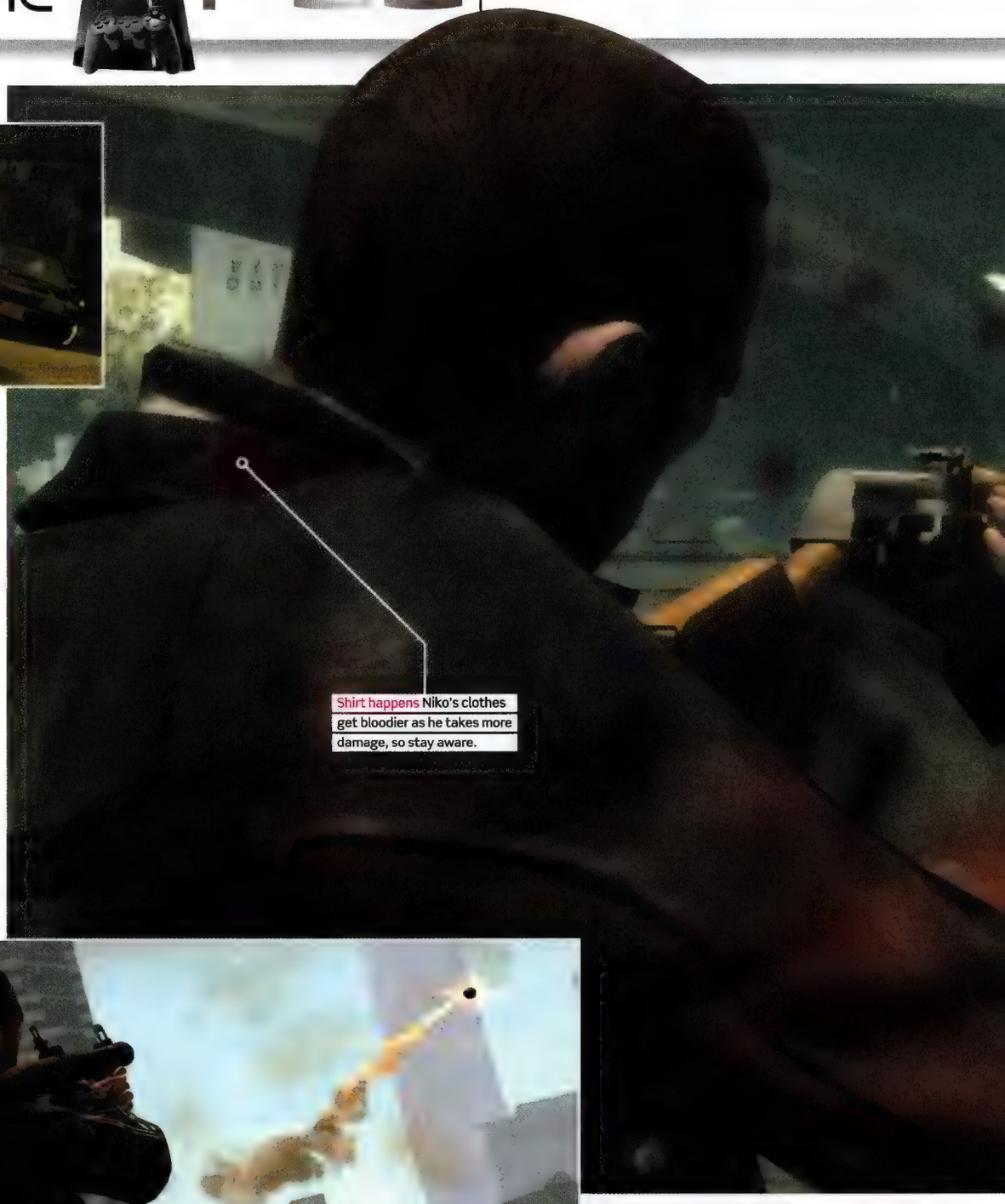
Dirt bike skids leave muddy trails, steam rises from vents, machine-gun fire scars solid walls, while heavy fire will scar – and permanently destroy – parts of the environment. There's a real sensation that the world exists without you – from binmen swaying from rubbish trucks to the elderly sitting down to rest while carrying grocery sacks – that only crumples under deliberate inspection. For example, while pedestrians have a staggering variety of banter – it's rumoured that Rockstar are the biggest employer of voice talent in New York – you can't engage in direct conversation like, say, *Oblivion*. It's mildly dislocating, but only because the overall illusion is so intoxicating – the volume of individually-styled pedestrians on some busy streets is remarkable, as is the volume of independently thinking traffic at busy intersections.

Your senses are tickled 360° by pedestrian chatter, random car shunts, horns, active billboards, street bustle, radio and the odd blinding flash of sunlight. It feels like, well, New York, and *really* comes alive when, say, day turns to night in Times Square, and the rain – think of *Uncharted*'s final scenes – moodily sploshes onto neon-licked puddles. It might 'just' be set in Liberty City/New York, but the 24-hour day/night cycle and weather constantly refresh the experience. Staring out at Algonquin's (*GTAIV*'s version of Manhattan) skyline at twilight – you can even use the quayside fixed binoculars to zoom in on the skyscrapers – verges on true beauty, like, say the first time your drove a Harley at daybreak over the alkali flats in *GTA: SA*.

Unique moment #2

Jogging through Broker, we spot a passing sports car that takes our fancy. A quick jab of ▲ later (a familiar carjack), it's ours – or so we think. Before we can pull off, the driver has yanked us out and is swinging punches. Shocked, we manage to sneak

Swerve driver Crash at speed and it's possible to launch through the windscreen and land in a crumpled heap.



Shirt happens Niko's clothes get bloodier as he takes more damage, so stay aware.

out a few kicks and reclaim the vehicle – then proceed to run him over. Twice. Sickos might have reversed over him again for the thrill of seeing his arms flail under the wheels, but not us.

Our first new mission is 'To Live And Die In Alderney' (read: New Jersey), the second part of 'Truck Hustle' (see Mission Guide), and involves mafia goons Ray and Phil Bell. It relates to a previous trailer, with Niko asking for a favour to help "find that special someone". Phil agrees, but first they need to shift the drugs acquired in the last mission. You give Phil a lift to a familiar old mansion – an update of mobster Salvatore Leone's house from *GTA3*, surrounded by fields. The drugs have been loaded into two mafia cars, but as you leave the police arrive. You have to escape to a safe drop point, and stop your ally in the second car from getting busted.

A huge car chase ensures, with the LCPD employing swerve and block tactics. You can now press L1 to elbow out the car window, and aim with the right stick as you drive. When you reach the drop point, you're forced to carry the drugs in bags – shoulder slung, reminiscent of the loot bags from Michael Mann's Heat. When you reach the Easy Lay Carpet escape van, a police chopper soars into view – but it's dispatched with an RPG shot (the rocket launcher has a wooden grip, in true Eastern Bloc fashion), resulting in glorious smoke plumes.

RPG fan The rockets really show off the new smoke effects – and the scenery damage model.

A quick drive to safety and it's mission complete. The game auto-saves after each successful job – way more practical than ducking back to a safehouse disc icon – and after key off-mission objectives, too. Fail and you receive a text on your mobile inviting you to replay the mission. A welcome respite from driving halfway across town to restart the goal like previous games, even given the 'trip skip' feature. *GTAIV* might not drown in new features, but the myriad tweaks are practical, not cosmetic.

Unique moment #3

We're exploring the back alleys looking for fire escapes or poles to scale a building – they may not be as prevalent as first thought – when an angry beggar jostles us. We dish out some punches, but he still keeps coming. Pride affronted, we headbutt him to the floor. Another tap of △, and Niko kicks his body while shouting "And you thought I was a joke!" We know it's wrong, but we haven't felt this excited since that bit in Die Hard when Bruce Willis has Karl on the chain and punches him in the face while shouting "Karl, you fuck!" for no good reason.

Our second mission, Jamaican Heat, introduces Little Jacob, the weed-puffing arms dealer – and acts as a tutorial for the new cover/targeting system. You pick up Jacob, and are asked to cover his back

Grand Theft Auto IV

"Doesn't drown in new features, but the tweaks are practical, not cosmetic"

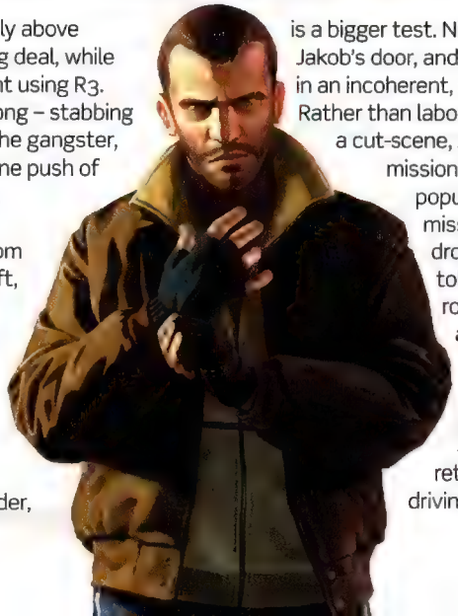
Rich or Pour The rain effects are stunning, especially at night, with incredible puddles forming.

Muzzle Quest Enemy AI is fairly solid, but enemies work less in packs than, say, *Uncharted*.

"Pride affronted, we headbutt him to the floor..."

from a rooftop slightly above where he does a drug deal, while crouching out of sight using R3. Naturally, it goes wrong – stabbing L2, Niko auto-locks the gangster, taking him down in one push of R2 with the shotgun. Another gangster suddenly appears from a doorway to your left, neatly testing the new auto-targeting. Niko locks on and fires, before driving Jacob to safety. Mission complete.

The third new mission, Jacob's Ladder, is a bigger test. Niko knocks on Jakob's door, and finds him mumbling in an incoherent, stoned, patois. Rather than labour the exposition in a cut-scene, Jacob explains the mission as you drive – a popular technique in the missions we saw. You drop Jacob off, and are told to wait over the road. It goes wrong again. You need to take out three gangsters – we ran them over in Jacob's car – before retrieving him, and driving to the gangster's



Info-blast

PSM3 digs deeper...

Mobile › Services

As well as calling 911, you can dial the paramedics, or fire department – handy if you need to procure one of their vehicles in a hurry.

Death › Revival

Some mechanics are familiar – die and you wake up at the general hospital (but simply click the 'Retry' text on your mobile's Messages folder to dive back into a mission), get busted and you're hauled to the police station. There's no Ammu-Nations, mind you.

Mission guide

A recap of all missions so far

Call and Collect

Bent cop Frances McCreary has dirt on Niko's past, and asks him to retrieve a memory stick from a man who blackmailing McCreary. It's essentially a *mobile phone tutorial* – Niko goes to a seaside viewpoint, gets a mission update text, and rings the target to reveal him. Also introduces the *new Wanted system*.

Final Interview

Working for McCreary, Niko visits a *TW@ internet cafe* to apply for a job at lawyer's Goldberg, Ligner & Shyster. He buys a *new suit from Perseus*, and later kills partner Mr Goldberg during his 'interview' in a cut-scene. With a 3 star wanted level, he used the *new cover/targeting system* to fight to safety on the top floor.

Search and Delete

Brucie needs Niko to whack an informant. Niko steals a police car and finds him using the *on-board police database* (you can search using mobile phone photos, or by name). His location is fed into the *car's GPS* – after an on-foot chase, the informant is whacked.

Deconstruction for Beginners

Playboy X needs Niko to 'clean up' mafia goons spoiling a building project so he can impress a wealthy Arab called Yusuf. You use a *service lift* to scale a huge building, and *sniper rifle* the lookouts. You then storm the site, using cover wisely, as Playboy X helps out over an earpiece.

Truck Hustle

Mafia man Phil Bell asks Niko to recover a truck of 'cursed' heroin from the Triads, since Ray (another mafia man) refuses. The first truck is a cover, so Niko blows it up with a *rocket launcher*. Niko then chases the real truck, *hanging from the back*, then shmmying on the roof (like in the trailers) – using D-pad left/right to roll and keep balance – before *car-jacking it on-the-fly*. Drop it at Frankie's (Bell's nephew) North Alderney mansion.

Cover Game

Track record There's no body building like *GTA: SA*, but you can swap outfits for occasions.

Suits you Other outfits include a buff 70s brown check jumper and open neck pimp shirt.

Mobile: explained

Your key on-the-move functions

Contacts
Niko has a list of about 20 contacts on his mobile phone – we recognise about ten from missions and artwork. Click and press the 'call' button to ring 'em.

Messages
Text messages are another key way of maintaining friendships and relaying mission updates. You can use the 'Retry' mission texts as a shortcut if you die or get busted.

Reminders
We can't recall if this was a seperate menu option, but you'll be able to set timed alarm reminders and view your calendar.

Music
You can Listen to all 18 radio channels on-the-go with this, even in on-foot shootouts.

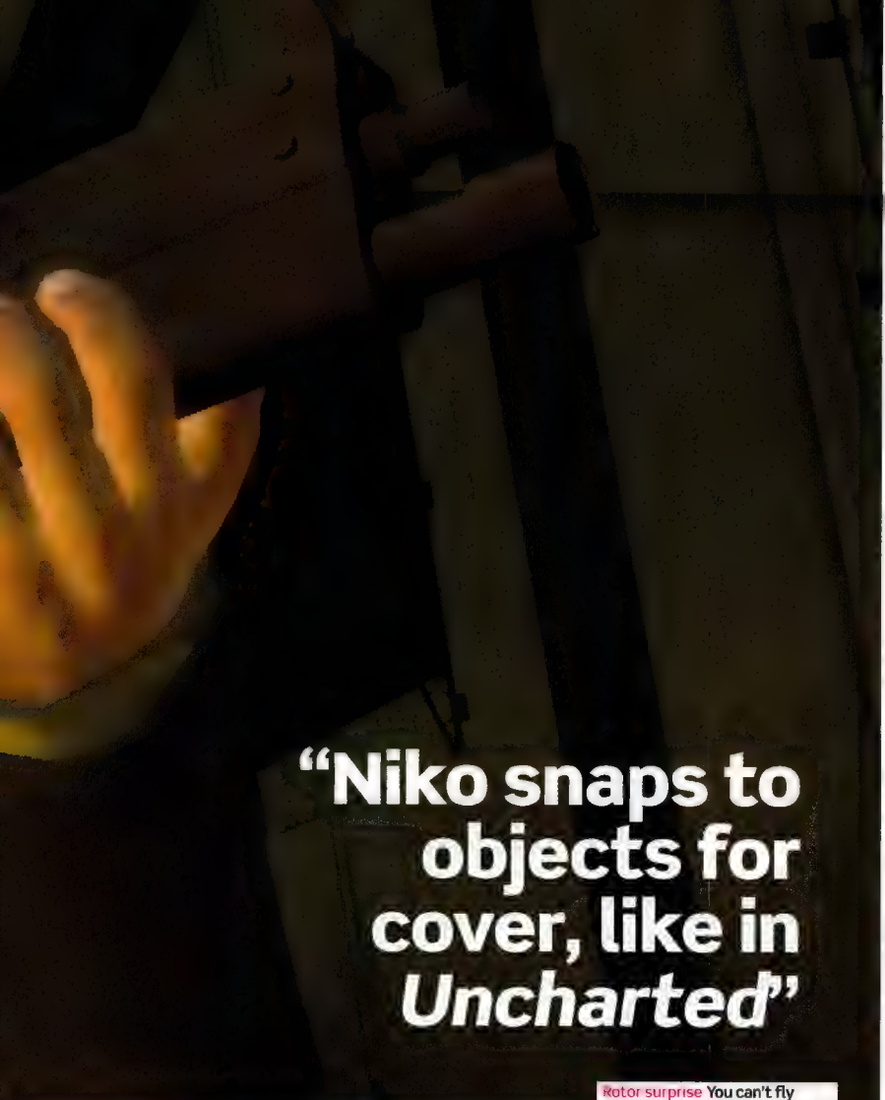
Photos
Like the camera of old, with a zoom-in function. Photos can be uploaded to the police computer.

Multi-player
A mystery – we weren't allowed to click it. But its presence suggests drop in, drop out online play, sure to be revealed in full in the next weeks.

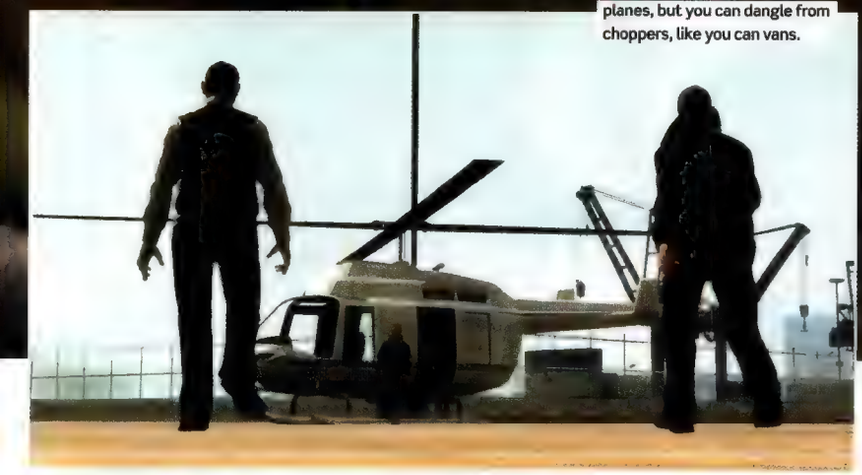
drug den. It's a tutorial for the new cover system. Tap L1, and Niko snaps to the nearest object, in a similar fashion to *Uncharted* – tap again, and he snaps away. You can even sprint to objects (by tapping ⊗), then hold L1 like a brake to slide behind cover.

We take cover by the door frame, and edge towards the window – Niko ducks automatically, as you'd expect. Tapping R2 without auto-lock, we fire 'blind' into the room, Niko poking his hands over the window like in *The Getaway*. One gangster down, we charge into the house and use cover to clean up the survivors. We're left ducking behind a sofa, and using the shotgun to blind-fire the last foe. Our loose shots hit a plaster wall, and after a few blasts, cause it to chip and crumble, before it eventually collapses.

We use the gap to pop some pistol shots into the gangster's midriff – then nab the



"Niko snaps to objects for cover, like in *Uncharted*"



Rotor surprise You can't fly planes, but you can dangle from choppers, like you can vans.

medical pack on the table. Niko's health is measured in two ways – visibly, by the blood on his clothes, and scientifically, by a green semi-circle on the left of your radar (the right semi-circle shows armour status). When you're about to die, blood splats the edge of the screen, and it fades into black and white – like a few recent games. You can restore energy by resting, using medical kits or eating – you can buy hot dogs at stands, for example. House clear, you drop off Jacob at the Homebrew cafe (to a remix of Ne Yo's 'Because of You' – but the soundtrack is to be confirmed).

Unique moment #4

We've stolen an ice cream van – with Cherry Popper branding – and press R3 to start the nursery rhyme-style 'horn'. Flicking through the radio, we hazard upon the techno channel and – by pure accident of fate – the nursery rhyme and techno rhythms almost merge in synch, like some twisted 2 Many DJs Mash Up. Suitably thrilled, we smash straight over a fire hydrant, causing a fizzing jet of realistic spray. We hop out of the cab, wondering what'll happen if we try to jump through it. Landing ten feet away, in a crumpled heap of limbs, we vow not to try again.

Our final mission, Harbouring A Grudge, sees Niko link up with Irish hoodlum Patrick McCreary (Packie, for short) – who we can reveal (after spotting a family photo in the cut-scene) is related to bent policeman Frances McCreary (introduced in the Call and Collect mission) who has dirt on Niko's past and wants favours to keep quiet. We meet Packie in the family home during an engaging conversation between his gran and sister – a far more sympathetic soul, who takes a shine to Niko (love interest, perhaps?). It's worth noting that *GTAIV*'s dialogue is sharper than previous games – better characterised, and less indulgent. It's less intrusive too, since most info is related in real-time play. We failed this mission three times, and each time Packie explained the set up in a new way – once banging on about a frat party he'd attended the night before and fallen for a girl. These snippets encourage replay, and add colour to Liberty City's protagonists.

Rather than drive to the harbour, Niko hails a cab – hold L1, and any driver in earshot will ferry to a halt. The cab driving mechanic has been well-documented, but

Who's who in GTA?

The game's early major players

Niko Bellic Niko is in his mid-thirties, from Eastern Europe and has been involved killing, selling and smuggling people before he arrived in Liberty City.

Roman Bellic Niko's cousin is a 'friendly buffoon'. He's duped Niko into coming to the USA to help save his failing taxi business. Make friends for free taxi rides.

Little Jacob One of Roman's few friends, Jacob is a Jamaican arms dealer who keeps his stash in the boot of his car – make friends and he's a mobile armoury.

Brucie Roman's pal, steroid-addled car nut glimpsed in third trailer, and the Search and Delete mission. Make friends and he's a mobile chopper service. Handy.

Manny A former gangster who's cleaned up his act and encouraging kids to do the same by filming a documentary. Prime for celebrity voiceover.

Elizabeta A small time Bohan drug dealer who's survived by 'eliminating' rivals. Has drug problems and under new pressure from police.

Vlad A low level Russian gangster who pretends to be the boss of the Hove beach area of Broker – as our cover image suggests, he's in above his ahead.

Patrick Irish ex-pat 'Packie' McCreary is Elizabeta's pal, and his sister likes Niko (she kisses him in third trailer). Related to bent cop Frances McCreary, too.

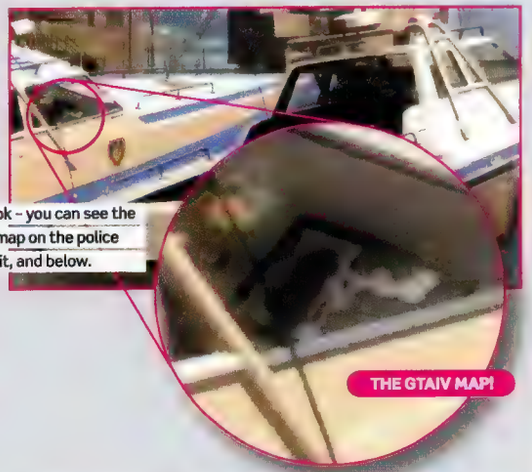
Playboy X Knows Elizabeta, a hustler (from third trailer), and owns a mansion in Algonquin. Used to work with Dwayne Moore, who's fresh out of prison.

Liberty City: revealed

Your first look at *GTAIV*'s version of New York

Our map may be redrawn from a pencil sketch taken during play, but it's confirmed by a freeze frame still from the third trailer (see right) – the Liberty City map is visible in the police boat cockpit.

There are four main areas: Alderney (New Jersey), Algonquin (Manhattan), Bohan (The Bronx) and Broker (Brooklyn), connected with a series of bridges and tunnels, as revealed for the first time below.



Zoom 101 Look – you can see the Liberty City map on the police boat's cockpit, and below.

THE GTAIV MAP!

ST. PATRICKS

Spire man All the key landmarks have been recreated in loving detail, like in the first trailer.

CRYSLER BUILDING

Far Crysler Yet another of NY's key spots – all the major landmarks are in, as we said.

Grime capital Each area feels unique – much less samey than the city of PS2 *GTA3*.

STAR JUNCTION

Ped or dead The volume of peds, and their appearance, is unique to each real-life area.

BOOTH TUNNEL

Under grind We initially thought this was 'Holland Tunnel', but we're told it will be named Booth.

ALGONQUIN BRIDGE

Bridge racer You can really build up speed on the freeway, but traffic is more aggressive.

STATUE OF HAPPINESS

Liberty City The Statue Of Liberty is renamed, but gets it own small island to explore.

Bohan

Alderney

Dukes

Broker

Algonquin

Happiness Island

NORTH WOOD HEIGHTS BRIDGE

DUKES BAY BRIDGE

EAST BOROUGH BRIDGE

HICKEY BRIDGE

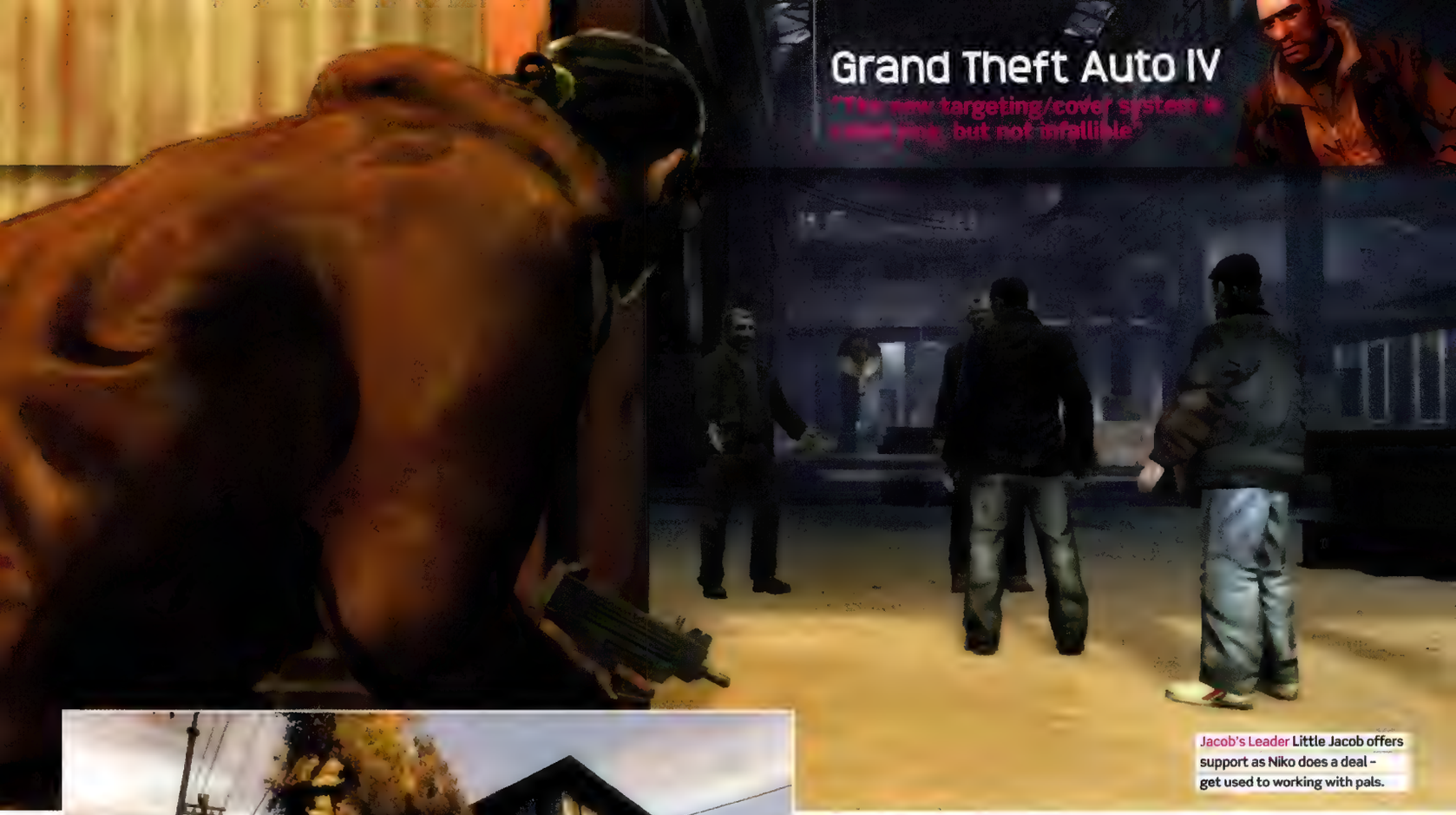
ALGONQUIN BRIDGE

BOOTH TUNNEL

BROKER BRIDGE

Grand Theft Auto IV

"The new targeting/cover system is [illegible], but not infallible"



Jacob's Leader Little Jacob offers support as Niko does a deal – get used to working with pals.

Squat gun In Search And Delete you can skid into battle, then jump behind your car as cover.

sitting back and tapping ◎ to change the camera (from distant pans to wheel cams) and soaking up Liberty City's gritty beauty is one of the game's highlights – and a neat change of pace from shooting. You can even ask the cabbie to change the radio by pressing the D-pad left/right (same as when you drive) – "If you don't mind, I'd like to listen to something else," pipes Niko. There are 18 radio stations and we're sworn to secrecy, but expect the usual mix of licensed R&B, classics, rock, techno, chat, ambient, latino, reggae and jazz, amongst others – plus a Russian station. Smashing through city centre traffic to Queen's One Vision doesn't disappoint.

At the harbour, Niko and Packie pay the cabbie ($39 – double if you speeded it up), and clamber up some storage containers. Obvious route blocked, Niko leaps onto a billboard (⊗ to jump and clamber), and shimmies sideways across to more platforms. In no time, you're on the warehouse roof and watching gangsters unload some illicit medical supplies (sort of like Prozac) from the harbour. Your goal: nick them. After a brief cut-scene, you're free to clear out the area as you wish.

Kindly, our Rockstar rep unlocks a *lot* of juicy guns, and we use the sniper rifle to clear a path (it feels the same as ever).

Small gripe: when we switched to machine-gun fire, the auto-lock danced quickly between clearly visible distant targets, but failed to pick up the most obvious threat – a man shooting us almost directly from below, who was presumably 'hidden' by the bannister rail of our raised platform. We had to use the manual aim (squeeze L2 gently half-way) to nail him. Later in the mission, we had a similar problem, where we couldn't shoot a man behind open railings, which were acting as if solid. We're hugely confident this is a teething issue that will be ironed out in development, but be warned – the new targeting/cover system is snappy and satisfying, but not infallible. We'd be surprised if some tougher missions didn't end in angry swears and thrown pads – almost a *GTA* trademark. But time will tell.

Feeling bold, we charged to the warehouse, rapidly swapping between cover: one second blind firing aside storage containers, the next popping head shots behind crates (L2 to auto-lock, and nudge the pad up for a deadlier, but harder and more skilful, shot), and finally *sliding* behind barrels, leaving a wake of blood-splat enemies. It's far more dynamic than shootouts of old. It's possible to down

Info-blast

PSM3 digs deeper...

Pedestrian › Anger

Each pedestrian has unique dialogue, but they also have unique personalities – some are passive (indicated by a green outline), while others will fight back if agitated (red outline).

Side Missions › Stunts

We're pretty sure we saw stunt objectives on the debug menu, but no word whether ice cream, vigilante, etc, missions will return – we can only guess 'yes'.

How 'friendship' works

Build stable relationships and you'll be rewarded with goodies

Ring 'em up Niko has about 20 contacts on his mobile phone (we know of nine). You can ring a friendly face and arrange to hang out...

Pool together You can play pool, darts, bowling, go dancing, drink or eat (like dates in *GTA: SA*). This grows your relationship with that character.

Rewards Reach, and maintain, key friendship levels and you'll be rewarded – Roman gives you free taxi lifts, Jacob a mobile armoury, etc.

Light arms Gently squeeze, not hold, the L2 button to target objects manually.

people without killing them, too – encouraging 'mercy' shots, or just shutting them up when the moaning gets too much. Area clear, Packie rejoins you and you drive the drugs to a safe area in a Binco van.

Wheel deal Pushbikes? No sign, but motorbike wheelies are in.

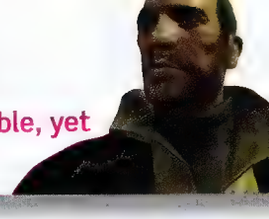
Rock solid

It's not that easy, mind. You're instantly pursued, and have to drop grenades to shake rival cars. Truth told, we couldn't do it – the grenades are dropped, not thrown, so if you get the van stuck behind traffic or a fire hydrant (as we did), you're going to blow yourself up. It wasn't annoying in our demo, but might be on, say, your fifth go. It's also worth noting our Rockstar rep kept topping up our health with a cheat, or we'd have died much more often – you really need to use cover, not blaze gung-ho. That said, Rockstar are still balancing the game, and you may be able to take more hits. If you do get the van to safety, you meet up with mafia hood Ray – but either way our playtest was over.

Gut reaction? Even thinking back, making sense of 35 pages of notes, there's too much to relay in even 12 pages. Key observations: cars feel more sensitive, and incredibly differentiated. It's really easy to oversteer, so you'll need to slow down for corners and use brake feathering. Relax – it's a good thing, emphasising skill. Physics play a big part, too – you feel ultra-vulnerable on a bike or scooter, but like the Road King in a chunky Patriot (like a Humvee). You can literally crunch or topple smaller traffic, with realistic collisions.

Unique moment #5

We've climbed over the fence, and are trying to find a working car on the rollercoaster – we can't. After an ill-thought manual climb, we



return to the ground, and visit the main fair. A bum asks us for money, and we give him $5 – he's grateful, but we can't see any gameplay benefit. We flick on the jazz channel on our mobile phone, and headshot him to reclaim the cash. Yes, we're horrible. We spend the money in Little Jakob's Homebrew café on one of the QuB3D arcade machines – it's like a 3D version of Tetris*, and reminiscent of the minigames in* GTA: SA*. We try to play pool, too, but either it wasn't working in the code we played, or it's multi-player only.*

It's big (a powerboat ride down Algonquin's east side took ten real-time minutes). It's dense (streets buzz with uniquely-animated pedestrians mumbling unique dialogue, car bumpers dent, panels riddle with bullets). It's stupid (it's currently tuned a *bit* hard, and the targeting wasn't perfect). It's clever (the little easter eggs in cut scenes, the multiple mission dialogue). It's funny (self-parodying mafia archetypes Phil and Ray Bell are genuinely witty, while random moments thrill: we drunkenly smashed the car into a lamp post, and you can see passenger Roman banging his head on the dashboard, yelping "Jesus!"). It's inspiring (from ogling Times Square to kneeling over the quayside at sunset). And, above all, it's fun. Almost relentlessly fun.

It might not be laden with staggering innovation – though the multi-player mode is rumoured to be much more expansive than anyone believed, accessed via your mobile phone (we're predicting drop in, drop out, online co-op/versus gang missions, where you juggle loyalties between the Yardies, Triads, Latinos etc, with kudos implications for the main game) but reeks of tried-and-tested polish – the apex of the *GTA* series to date. If previous *GTA* gameplay mechanics were rustily functional, these are craftsmen's tools. And most staggering of all, while it's not that dissimilar to *GTA3* in terms of setting, we've only played a few hours, barely scraping, say 2% of the full game and playing with certain key features disabled – yet we still can't find enough pages in the magazine to describe its bewildering swell of possibility. The world *sweats* opportunity. Niko is right *and* wrong: Perhaps things here *will* be different.

Rarely has a game felt so simultaneously comfortable, yet laced with the uncertainty, and thrill, of exploration. Even at this early stage for PS3, April 29 marks a new chapter in next-gen gaming. PSM3

Stop Press!

Dan Houser speaks...

Key moment› Revealed

"One of my favourite songs was on the radio while two cop cars were chasing me through Chinatown. Suddenly, another car rammed me, and I was flying through the windshield. I ducked into cover and could still hear the song playing from my car. The cops opened fire, but hit a pedestrian who pulled out his gun. Suddenly, there's a full-scale war between a random gang and the cops, letting me escape. My other favourite moment? When Niko's past catches up with him and he must figure out what to do – but I don't want to spoil the surprise..."

Hold up **Niko raises him arms when stopped by cops, but move fast and you can retaliate.**

"The game world *sweats* with opportunity"

PS3

Pub Activision Blizzard | **Dev** High Moon
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI PS3's best movie license yet?

ON THE DISC
See The Bourne Conspiracy on the disc today

Roll out the barrel There are plenty of environmental attacks, like dunking this guy in a barrel of water.

INFLUENCES

What inspired The Bourne Conspiracy

The Bourne Identity | James Bond | Paul Greengrass | Resident Evil 4 | Manhunt | Mini Coopers

The Bourne Conspiracy

Why Bourne on PS3 could be a license to thrill

Dave Meikleham

Playing *The Bourne Conspiracy* is like riding on one of those rickety old rollercoasters you'd find on a Blackpool promenade. Thanks to an in-game camera that constantly jerks, weaves and bobs like a tumble dryer with Tourettes, every move Bourne makes feels like it should come with a sick bag. While this may sound annoying, it actually proves to be (mostly) thrilling. And *Conspiracy's* escape and evade cinematography perfectly mimics the frenetic camera style of Paul Greengrass – director of the last two films. The game also features a script by Tony Gilroy, the screenwriter, and fight choreography by the movies' stunt coordinator – so the only thing in Conspiracy that doesn't feel ripped straight from the celluloid is that World's Sexiest Man/Mr Potato Head (delete to suit) Matt Damon, is absent.

Hand to Fight! The *Uncharted*-style shoulder cam makes shooting with Jason a breeze.

Most of the action centres on the main events from The Bourne Identity, but flashbacks that precede the first flick have also been interlaced into the game. Certain levels are based on Jason's time as a Treadstone agent and essentially act as a series of hits. Trouble is, almost every one of these flashbacks goes horribly wrong thanks to botched info provided by the shady spy company.

QUOTE

Developer insight

"We're taking elements from the novels and the first film to create the definitive Bourne experience. The plot will embellish the narrative and will give fans some insight into who Jason was while he was working for Treadstone."

Rory McGuire
Lead Designer

Swiss roll

One of the levels we played had us chasing a Turkish general across the rain-slashed streets of Zurich in Switzerland. After traversing through a subway system and offing a wide array of goons through a mixture of sharp shooting and Bourne's takedown moves – more on those later –

Push comes Bourne has a variety of CQC fighting manoeuvres that he can break out on the run.

the level moved onto a tense shootout outside an airport, before finally culminating in an edgy knife fight on the back of a cargo plane.

Other levels will flesh out the main action sequences from the first film. Take the edgy chase through the Russian Embassy near the start of Identity. In the movie it lasts about 90 seconds, but the game has embellished this scene and expanded it into a frantic five-minute escape mission. This gave us the perfect chance to try out some of the forgetful killer's array of close combat moves. Like the erratic shaky cam used for chase sequences, Bourne's fistfights have been given some special camera treatment. And finishers use lightning quick camera cuts to capture that hectic Bourne feel.

"Use a food trolley or a biro to dish out all sorts of pain"

Landing successful punches and kicks builds up your adrenaline meter, which can then be used to perform takedowns. The clever bit is that these finishers are heavily influenced by the films' fight scenes, and pressing ◎ next to certain bits of the environment will see Bourne use everyday

MANOEUVRES

Bourne to be wild

How Jason Bourne handles himself in a scrap

Fight club Light and heavy attacks are mapped to ⊗ and △, while ◎ doles out Bourne's special takedowns. Finishers work in a similar fashion to *Manhunt* and you can build up several tiers of them, which get progressively more unpleasant.

Easy as QTE *God Of War* inspired action sequences punctuate the action. And, unless you react quickly to the on-screen prompts, you'll quickly find yourself in the custody of Kremlin cops. Thankfully, these QTE prompts will vary each time.

Shoot to thrill The shooting handles in a similar fashion to *Resident Evil 4*. Unlike Leon, though, Bourne drops his weapons after each firefight. He's a killer with a conscience see, only using guns as a last resort. Bless, eh?

Bruise Lee Take a beating and Jason will start to look like he's gone 12 rounds with Floyd Mayweather.

Make the cut Paul Greengrass' jittery, unpredictable camera-cuts are in the game's fights.

objects to gain the advantage. It's amazing how useful these mundane background appliances proved in our escape from the Embassy. Whether it was giving a Russian copper a close encounter with a radiator, using a food trolley to dish out concussions or wielding a biro like a lightsaber, every takedown was wince inducing.

Shooting mechanics are also encouragingly solid. Wisely, High Moon studios have opted for a *Resi 4*-style behind-the-shoulder view, which gives gunfights a real immediacy. We were also impressed how quickly and seamlessly we were able to switch between guns and hand-to-hand combat. And breaking the face of a Swiss security guard, before squeezing a few rounds into a group of terrorists, 30 conveyed the sense of controlling a thirty million quid super agent. All this, coupled with the car chases (see PSM97), suggests great things for *Bourne*. More soon.

Spark life Many parts of the environment are interactive and let you dish out the hurt with them.

PSM3 Reckons

It looks good and plays very excitingly indeed. This could turn out to be one of PS3's strongest licensed games.

ETA AUG 2008

PS3

Pub Warner Bros | **Dev** Traveller's Tales
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Action
FYI Batman gets the blocky treatment

ON THE DISC
We'll have Lego Batman or a mic in the future

Lego Batman: The Videogame

Holy new Lego adventure, Batman

David Cook

1 Play as the Dynamic Duo

Stretch Boy and Clobber Girl? Pah. The perfect co-operative super heroes are the Dark Knight and Robin the Boy Wonder. "We're focusing on two characters, instead of a constantly changing roster from level to level, giving our heroes many more moves and abilities," says TT's Jonathan Smith. "You'll find our cast to be much more resourceful than those in *LSW*, using weapons and skills in surprising ways."

Batman voice: Here's Robin. Expect him to have some different skills to Batman.

Robin won't be as good at fighting as Batters

You can literally knock your enemies' blocks off

2 Different styles

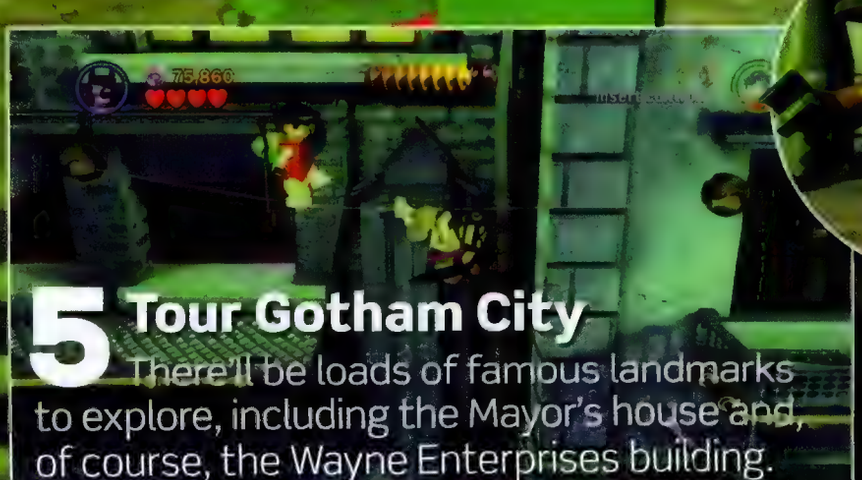
It looks quite '60s TV show' but Smith says, "We take our cues from many comic book versions. As you see more, you'll notice our Gotham City is very different to the brightly-coloured TV series."

3 Drive the Batmobile, fly the Batplane

As *LSW* had X-Wings and speeders, *Lego Batman* has the Batmobile and Batplane. You'll be able to build vehicles for yourself too.

4 Classic enemies

The story sees Gotham City's evildoers escape Arkham Asylum. "It's the ultimate Batman story," says Smith. Catwoman, Joker, Scarecrow and Penguin are definites, but expect nearly every Batman character around. "You won't be disappointed," Smith reckons.



5 Tour Gotham City

There'll be loads of famous landmarks to explore, including the Mayor's house and, of course, the Wayne Enterprises building.

PSM3 Reckons

It's a toss-up as to whether we're more excited about this or *Lego Indy*, but one thing's a cert: this, like all *Lego* games, will be ace fun.

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Namco Bandai
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Action
FYI Darth Vader's *Soul Calibur* debut

ON THE DISC
You'll be there on *Soul Calibur* IV on the next disc

Soul Calibur IV

Cinema's ultimate sci-fi baddie gets surprising new role...

David Cook

Darth Vader. In *Soul Calibur*. It's not the first time the series has gone in for some lunatic guest appearances – Link from the *Zelda* games appeared in *SC2* on GameCube and Necrid from the Spawn comics turned up in the PS2 version, as did Heihachi from *Tekken* – but this is the weirdest cameo yet.

Seeing Vader scrapping with Mitsurugi in *SCIV*'s most recent trailer – however daft – certainly cranked up our interest in a series that, in *Soul Calibur 3* (PSM69, 89%) was just a *little* guilty of treading water. Two questions arise: the first is "How can swords and sticks possibly be a match for a lightsaber?" and the second is "I can see Yoda over there – what about him?". Well, to answer the first question, we've no idea – but since when has *Calibur* cared about being *sensible*? Haven't you *seen* Voldo? He's an S&M gimp with *knives for fingers*.

"Luke, I am your father..." We can't wait to see what special moves and combos Vader has.

Good versus evil

As for the second question, Yoda is only appearing in the Xbox 360 version. Certain quarters of the internet will have you believe Namco have done this because PS3 is 'evil', like Vader, and Xbox 'heroic', like Yoda. We reject such nonsense in favour of the far more sensible theory that Vader appears on PS3 because PS3 is black – like Vader – while Xbox 360 has green trimmings and a green logo, suiting Yoda and his lime-tinged skin. But whatever. The only clue *SC* Director Katsutoshi Sasaki has offered is "We make games for the users and think what makes them excited – and that was guest characters. And characters that would fit were Vader and Yoda." Quite.

So what else is new? Sasaki has dropped hints about there being new ways to "reach the goal of depleting your opponent's health". Does this mean instant kills? Projectile weaponry? There's more to be revealed here, it seems. New moves and combos have been introduced, of course, and the character models and environments glisten with next-gen sheen.

One interesting change, however, is that said environments are destructible – which alters the dynamics of matches, especially for those who play to win via *SC*'s 'Ring Out' system. For instance, an area might be walled in, and you'll need to smash the bricks down before you can hurl your rival from the ring.

We love *Soul Calibur*, and while Vader has split the team love/hate, at least it'll attract new people to the fold. Elsewhere it looks like evolution rather than revolution, but we still can't wait to see the finished game.

Jedi am legend! Of course, *everyone* will want to play as Vader. Mass arguments await.

PSM3 Reckons

How different *SCIV* will be from its forebears remains to be seen, but the addition of Vader will, for many, be reason enough to get excited.

ETA JUNE 2008

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Crystal Dynamics
Players 1 | **Genre** Adventure
FYI Lara's first next-gen outing

ON THE DISC
We'll get *Underworld* onto a disc ASAP

Solve a lengthy three-part puzzle and this enormous fiery gate opens, revealing the Underworld

Tomb Raider Underworld

"It's totally different from *Uncharted*" pissed *TR* devs...

Andy Kelly

But, of course, it's *very* similar. Sure, *Drake*'s may be more action-orientated, but the spirit of both games is identical – adventure, action, exploration and ransacking ancient tombs – is the same. So what are Crystal Dynamics doing in retaliation to a game that took the *Raider* format and improved on it immeasurably? Well, they're making the new game *really effin' good*, for one.

At first glance it looks worryingly similar to *Legend* and *Anniversary*, despite running on next-gen hardware. Lara's slightly curvier, but the environments feel familiar. But as she gallops around in the rain and lightning blasts in the background, you start to appreciate how gorgeous it really is. Rather than smother the game in garish graphical effects, CD have made subtle use of shades and textures to create an organic, believable world. And did you think *Drake*'s wet t-shirt was impressive? Wait until you see Lara's bog-covered thighs after a tumble in the mud. They look *phenomenal*. Ahem.

In the demo we saw, Lara was shoving around an enormous stone calendar – used by the ancient Mayans to chart the movement of the cosmos. The developers skipped most of the puzzle (promising it to be massive, comprising of three parts that can be completed in any order) and went straight to the solution. Lara shifts a stone circle which opens a vast, elaborate gate leading to the game's titular Underworld – a demon-infested realm of unimaginable evil. Which (and don't scoff) means that the game will feature more fantastical, mythical enemies.

Our time with the game was brief, but we did see enough of the combat to gauge that it's been improved since *Anniversary*. Lara can now lock on to two targets at once with her dual-pistols, and it looked a lot more solid as she flipped

and strafed around a gang of panther poachers roaming the level.

The goal here seems to be subtle improvements and tweaks, rather than a whole, needless overhaul. And that's working in its favour because *Underworld* looks like the most focused, polished *Tomb Raider* game in years.

TIMELINE

Lara's best adventures...

Tomb Raider (1996)
PSOne
The purest, most puzzle-heavy *Raider* yet. Up with the best.

Tomb Raider 2 (1997)
PSOne
Genius puzzles and huge, varied environments. A stellar sequel.

TR: The Last Revelation (1999)
PSOne
A fantastic Egyptian setting in this one.

TR: Legend (2006)
PS2
A return to form for Lara and a great comeback after *AOD*.

TR: Anniversary (2007)
PS2
A stunning remake of the first *Tomb Raider* game. Check it out.

tombs | panthers | **rain** | climbing | **poachers**

PSM3 Reckons

Subtle changes to the way Lara moves, plus the physics of the new environments, all make this a contender to *Uncharted*'s crown.

ETA MID 2008

PS3

Pub EA | **Dev** DICE
Players 1-24 | **Genre** FPS
FYI 90% of the world can be blown to bits

ON THE DISC
Watch Bad Company in

Battlefield: Bad Company

Ignore the title, these crazy warmongers are *great* company

Nathan Irvine

As we live in a world where you can blast pretty much anything to bits if you aim enough high-powered weaponry at it, we're pleased that *Battlefield: Bad Company* follows the same rules of engagement. Houses, vehicles, trees and even massive chunks of land can be destroyed thanks to the potentially superb Frostbite graphics engine, built especially for this game. This means you can hop in a tank and cut a path through dense forests – pinging trees out from the ground as you go – or blow a hole in the side of a building to create an emergency entrance/exit. The possibilities are endless. Coming from DICE – the daddies of war-based FPSs on PC – PS3 might be receiving its first serious challenger to *Call Of Duty 4*'s crown.

Unlike previous *Battlefield* games, *Bad Company* laser-targets a compelling single-player campaign. The story revolves around three soldiers dumped into the titular Bad Company, a US military group where the army's loose cannons are dumped. There's the redneck Haggard whose love for blowing things up has made him a liability within the regular armed forces; Sweetwater, a rookie who's wet behind the ears but hot stuff with a rifle and Redford, the tough-talking sergeant of this dysfunctional group. It promises to be a cinematic experience laced with dark-humour as your guys go hunting for a haul of hidden gold. It's like that George Clooney flick Three Kings, but without the hammy acting. And while the offline mode is catching our interest, online multi-player has the potential to be equally accomplished, if not the highlight.

Map of honour

24 players will be fighting it out across huge maps that should rival *CoD4*'s excellent virtual wars. For starters, *Bad Company* has plenty of vehicles to bomb around in, such as tanks, boats and choppers, and each one has spare seats for ferrying around your

Toasted Get too close to the flames and you'll burn like a Guy Fawkes dummy doused in petrol.

Dude, sweet This here is Sweetwater; the rookie of the gang who looks a bit like Gordon Freeman. A *bit*.

Classic action hero Standard weaponry is capable of blowing up most things. Good.

A bridge too far If you can really smash structures away like this then we'll be mightily impressed.

team-mates and dropping them into battle. Unlike *CoD*'s somewhat claustrophobic arenas, the vast stages in *Bad Company* will allow you to hide in the hills and play as a stealthy sniper or, if subtlety isn't your thing, you can always pick the demolitions expert and flush out enemies with your bazooka. If it's anything like the forgotten PS2 prequel *Battlefield: Modern Combat*, then the online environments in *Bad Company* will make for some amazing fights. We honestly can't wait.

All by myself

Back to solo mode, and it seems DICE are making every effort to create a realistic war across the land of Eurasia. Events happen in real-time, so daylight encounters will turn to night and vice-versa – all of which will be illuminated by realistic shadows from the sun and the moon.

The Frostbite engine is also capable of producing some of the best grenade explosions we've ever seen. There's a scene where an air-strike is called and, as the bombs drop, the fiery balls of energy that erupt into the sky look madly beautiful, in a death-dealing kind of way. Check the footage out on this very issue's disc and marvel.

Everything, from the way that the background music will fade in and out when explosions go off to being able to carve holes in wire fences with your dagger just adds to the experience. And with the high level of destruction and things to blow apart, the different ways of approaching missions are almost endless – meaning you can add your own special touch to directives by doing them your way. We'll have a very special hands-on preview next issue. Don't miss it.

CAN'T WAIT

Like this? Play these...

Call Of Duty 4
PS3 94%
The best FPS on PS3, with a beast of an online mode.

The Orange Box
PS3 90%
Five ace games in one great package.

Unreal Tournament III
PS3
Shows that PC shooters *can* work on PS3.

PSM3 Reckons

We're excited about *BBC*. The online action will be great but we're also looking forward to the solo campaign. More soon.

PS3

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Montreal Studio
Players TBC | **Genre** FPS
FYI High-tech African sequel

ON THE DISC
We'll have some Far Cry 2 tech demos soon

Far Cry 2

PS3's best-looking FPS – developers reveal all

Nathan Irvine

Can you outline the plot?
Far Cry 2 does not have any clear story links to the first game. Instead we have focused on making sure the game has thematic links. We think of the original *Far Cry* as a retelling of HG Wells The Island Of Doctor Moreau, whereas we want *Far Cry 2* to be more akin to Conrad's Heart Of Darkness – a gritty, grimy, evocative journey into the mind of a madman. The player has one main objective – to hunt down and assassinate an arms dealer who is selling weapons to both sides in a factional conflict being waged in a failed African state. Like the open game world, the game story is also fully open. How the player chooses to complete his objective is up to him, and the story dynamically responds to the player's actions.

How will weather affect play?
The environment is a critical part of the game. Fire spreads faster in dry grassy fields and propagates in the direction of the wind. Rain and humidity on the other hand make using fire difficult. It is extremely hard to start a fire in a dense jungle for example, but using a fire to cut off an enemies flank or to flush an enemy squad out of a thicket is a strategy as old as warfare itself.

You'll meet 'buddies' in-game – will you be able to give them orders?
No. Buddies are characters who you unlock by rescuing them from some predicament they have gotten themselves into, but aside from the fact that they need to be 'unlocked', they are fully autonomous characters with their own goals and agendas, and their own personalities. You can't give them precise orders but they will attempt to take out enemies or you.

How has it been developing the new Dunia game engine to work with PS3?
Well, initially we were somewhat worried by some of the reported high complexity of developing for the PS3. Based on that, we made sure we had a group of programmers that were not scared by complexity and had a large console programming experience to work on the initial PS3 R&D of Dunia. We didn't know what to expect. Then, one thing that we realized pretty quickly as we started R&D on PS3, was that the hardware architecture had a very nice fit with some of our technical design decisions.

Will the PS3 version feature a level editor, like the first game?
Yes. We have a fantastic level editing tool that permits even the most casual of users to rapidly build beautiful and fun levels and share them quickly and easily with friends.

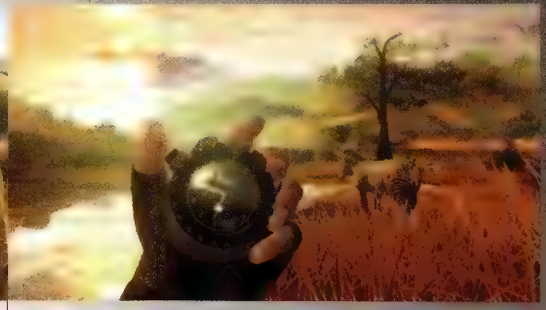
You can heal yourself – but what happens if you get shot in the head? Are there other injuries to repair?
Bullet wounds to the head are typically

NIGHT AND DAY

Why the clock is king

You'll have to change your tactics based on the time of day

11.37 am It's mid-morning in the African plains, with clouds licking the bright open sky – note the birds overhead. This is a bad time to sneak up on an enemy stronghold, since you'll be in plain view.



17.45 pm Dusk is setting, and the sun is casting warm orange hues over the environment. As beautiful as it looks, it's best to wait an hour or two for nightfall and sneak into the enemy base under cover of darkness.

How to use fire as a weapon

"Setting fires to a flank an area is a great way to 'pinch' the enemy," the developers reveal. "They can't retreat into a burning field after all. At its heart, fire is a force-multiplier; it's a powerful, sweeping and unpredictable element when it takes you by surprise, but when you know where a fire is starting and you know where the wind will carry it, you can use it to your advantage."

fatal – though some of the smaller weapons at long range can be less lethal. The healing procedure is to remove the bullet which has entered under the skin and slid along the surface of the skull – it's performed by opening the skin above the bullet with a knife and squeezing the bullet out of the hole. There's a lot of blood and the sound is pretty disturbing too, but – if you are lucky enough to have survived the shot in the first place the wound is frankly not a very serious one. You'll also need to mend arm dislocations, which is a stomach-churning affair.

Read the full interview over at www.psm3mag.com right now.

PSM3 Reckons

We're yet to go hands-on, but the technology is astonishing. We hope the first 'free-roaming FPS' can thrill like the more linear *CoD4*.

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

48 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.

49 PSN Mail
Send us a message over the PS3 Network.

50 Tech Ken
Ex-Sony guru answers your queries.

50 Poll Position
Vote – you'll see democracy in action.

51 MySpace
Our eight favourite readers this month.

52 Reader Reviews
Think we talk rubbish? You try it.

53 Right or Wrong?
Disagree with our scores? Say so.

53 YouTube
The best gamer videos out there.

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

A journey inside the human body...

LETTER

PS3 needs something to really stretch its microchip muscles to breaking point. Something massive, something amazing. I'm talking mysteries and miracles, the meaning of life, something that awes and humbles you so much that you breathlessly, ridiculously say "*This* is living!" We need a game that's immersive, universal, life-assuring, yet so easy to relate to. We need *Human Body: The Game*.

"Speeding down arteries, squeezing through tissue, muscle and bone"

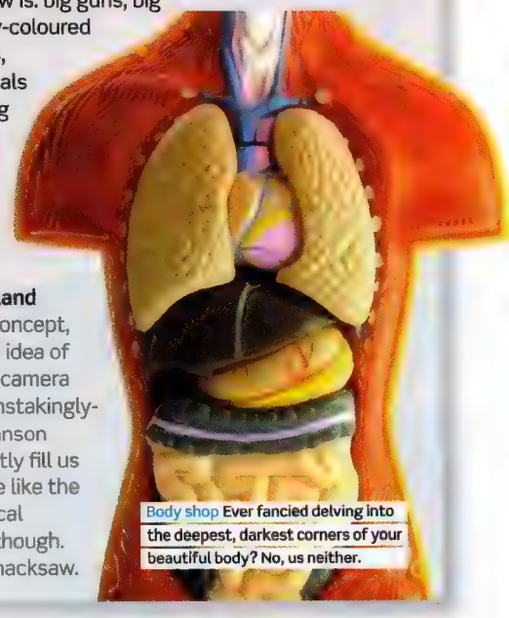
Do I hear you scoff? OK, this might be partly due to me being a medical student, but please bear with me as I shrivel your doubts. This could be amazing. You become your own immune system and patrol your body day and night to fight off invaders; speeding down arteries, squeezing through tissues, muscle and bone, into the brain and kidneys, anywhere. *Anywhere*. The body in full 3D is your game map, the dark and dreary regions to the bright and elegant. An explosion of colour and texture, all lovingly and faithfully rendered from every possible angle. Even the naughty bits, to boost sales. You could travel as a single cell or use a body overview to jump into a white blood cell at an interesting point. You'd be dealing with the microscopic drama that goes on every day in our bodies that we never know about – the bacteria, the viruses.

You would feel so awed, so connected, you would feel like you were somehow making a difference. It would be like *Okami* – the experience of doing good in a game. Of course, it would have to be fun, with minigames, management and strategy, or maybe FPS sections where you shoot down bacteria.

It'll never happen, though. We like what we know and what we know is: big guns, big fists, brightly-coloured furry animals, swords, sandals and squealing tyres. And that will never change.

Stephen Armstrong, Northern Ireland

A unique concept, although the idea of spinning the camera around a painstakingly-rendered Johnson doesn't exactly fill us with glee. We like the idea of medical minigames, though. Nurse – the hacksaw.



Body shop Ever fancied delving into the deepest, darkest corners of your beautiful body? No, us neither.

PSM3 Wants You!

Post PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a game

Email PSM3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation Network Send your messages to PSM

MySpace & the PSM3 blog Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

Lag the dog

I am at my wit's end and it's all down to *Call Of Duty 4* online. Surely I can't be the only person here with this annoyance. I'm talking about sitting in front of my TV waiting to get into a game that someone is hosting. Any game will do (Team Deathmatch, Free for All, Domination, Ground War, etc). I think you catch my drift. I think my current record for waiting to get into a game is well over an hour. First off the whole method of trying to join a game is all wrong in my opinion – you have to randomly select what type you want to play in whether it be Domination, Team Deathmatch, etc. But how are you supposed to know if any other players have chosen the same game type. Surely the guys at Activision have to do something about this? Rather than have a list of all the game

Lobby for change Do you hate *CoD4*'s lobbies too?

"You What?"

Is there a chance *Mass Effect* will ever come to PS3?
James, email
No, but the sequel will.

I've just read your *SingStar* history feature and in it you say that Depeche Mode "don't count" as legends. What? They're the best band ever!
Luke Centino, email
Well, they aren't, but you're entitled to your opinion. Big Fun rule.

In the weapons section of the *MGS4* article, a Pgo is pictured. However, the gun

PSNMail

Our PS3 username is PSM3uk. Send us a message. Please

Hard to beat

Can PS3 use any external hard drives? **lex12**
Yes, it can, but we don't have space to list every single one that works here – try Google.

Ass and ye shall receive

I wanna whoop your ass online. **smoothdudesteve**
That's an impossibility. If there's any ass-whooping going on, we're doing the whooping.

Lady bumps

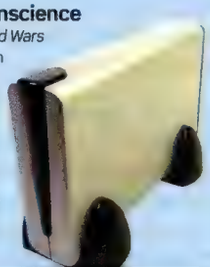
I come home to this... [attached picture of some women with big 'booties'] **Alexg85**
Hmm, do you? Or rushing upstairs when t'wife comes home: Internet History/Delete/Yes.

Office space

I live next door to where Sega have an office. How lucky am I? **doomstrike2007**
Probably not that lucky, seeing as it's likely some kind of admin office where men in suits work out how much to charge for games, rather than a development dream factory.

Crysis of conscience

Will *Crysis* or *Guild Wars* ever come out on PS3? **akbar26**
Here's our prediction; *Crysis* probably will, *Guild Wars* won't. But NCsoft are doing PS3 games now.



[illegible] send your messages to *PSM3uk*

types to pick from, hoping that some others have also pick the same, why not make that list show what games are being played and with how many players? That way you would be able to select a game knowing there's a good chance of getting into it – or is that *too* obvious for them to sort out?

Within my circle of friends I am the only one with a PS3, so I can't make that phone call to a mate and say "Come on – let's get into *Call Of Duty 4* and kick some ass!" (Or get my ass kicked – which is what normally happens when I *do* eventually get into a game, but I'm getting better.) This is one of the finest online games around so *please* Activision, make it more accessible to us players.

Tony Winslade, London

There have been some problems with *Call Of Duty 4*'s online servers – the lobbies desperately need more info – but Infinity Ward have been making efforts to improve the service. It's definitely better than it's been before; we've had some short waits, but mostly we get into a game almost immediately. It would be nice to have a list of active games like in *Warhawk*, but we also sort of like the random aspect of being tossed in with a load of strangers. It always makes for some interesting match-ups, at least.

shown is not a P90, it looks more like a G3KA4. Sorry, I know I'm an anorak. **fourminns, email**

Yes, you are. But we're more worried about your extensive knowledge of high-powered weaponry.

Slow dance

When I first bought *PES 08*, I said, "This *must* be better than *FIFA*." And it was, but after I played for about half an hour there was a problem... slowdown. The next month I went back to the store, then I saw there was a game called *Winning Eleven: World Soccer 2008*. It is the same as *PES*, but it is region 3. The store owner said *WE* has no slowdown – but when I got it home, it *did*. But then I updated the game and installed it, and it was much faster. Even when taking a penalty. Seriously, it is 98% faster than taking a penalty in *PES*. And there's no slowdown during replays – get it.

Syady Nayatra, Indonesia

You might be pleased to hear there's a new patch for PAL *PES 2008*, too. And try playing with no commentary – it helps out no end.

Sack it to me **Which do you prefer? The space marine? Oh, go away.**

Original sin

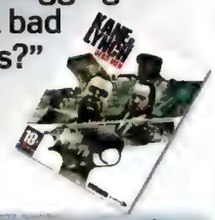
I have noticed that developers are becoming a bit lazy these days. Not only are they not really coming up with original games, but they're all making the same style of games, only with different features. It's becoming annoying as a gamer. PS3 games look the same as Xbox 360, and there seem to be far too many first and third-person shooters on the market. I'm getting sick and tired of them. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind the occasional FPS like

Slow poke **Apparently the NTSC version of *PES, Winning Eleven 2008*, has less slowdown. Hmm.**

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"Why do PSM3 keep blogging about bad games?"
Posted by: DG2010



"*GTA* is repetitive. All that depressing robbing and killing?"
Posted by: Havoc72

'Best' of the Rest

The lads chat podcasts. Y2Ken says "I think Milf has the best voice on the podcast." But Milf hardly says *anything*. And RandyTandy gets philosophical in the debate about repetitive games. "You could say life is repetitive; wake up, breathe, piss, go to bed." Cheer up, mate...

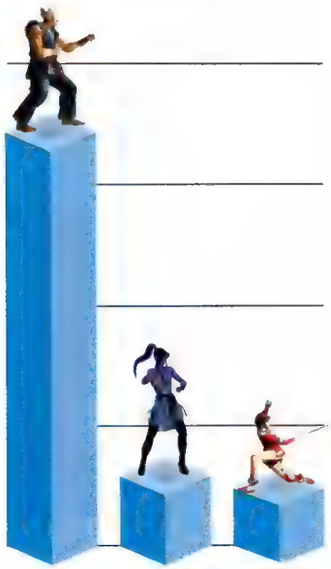
Blog **We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.**

Your Space

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best scrapper: *Tekken, VF* or *Soul Calibur*?



Tekken	VF5	SC
80%	11%	09%

Next Month Best *Ratchet: 1, 2* or *Tools Of Destruction*?

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Call Of Duty 4, but I want more variety in my games collection. Two of my all-time favourite games are *Shadow Of The Colossus* and *Broken Sword* – two brilliant games in a style that you just don't see much of these days. I don't want a new FPS that reverses time or lets you change terrain, I want a totally brand new style of title, like the forthcoming *LittleBigPlanet*. I would still buy *Metal Gear Solid 4* and *Killzone 2*, but if I was to go into a game shop and saw both of these games alongside *LittleBigPlanet*, neither of them would get a look-in.

Sometimes I think Nintendo are going in the right direction with the Wii, with its motion sensing controls. They are heading towards unique styles of gameplay. I don't own a Wii and probably never will because I am a sucker for realistic graphics, but I do the direction Nintendo are going in. So come on developers – give us some brand new game styles, not just the same old stuff with new ideas thrown in. *Please*?

Alex Allen, email

Developers have plenty of original ideas, it's just hard for them to implement them when they're being whipped into submission by money-hungry publishers. Every step of a game's production – from concept art to final textures – is scrutinised by the suits and if it seems to be wasting time or resources, it'll be slung on the scrapheap. As a result games can be quite formulaic. Let's hope *LBP* is a success and sparks a wave of creativity. And check out *Disgaea 3* if you want something a bit leftfield.

Plane and simple **Why did the *Ace Combat* series defect to Xbox 360?**

Bot to trot

Darn those Xbots. Spreading rumours about PS3 all over the Internet. You'll probably find a lot of this on YouTube, on videos about games. There'll always be an Xbot with a comment like "*Stranglehold* on PS3 looks rubbish compared to the 360 version!" or "*Killzone 2* is absolute rubbish compared to the almighty *Halo 3*!" These comments bug me, so I have massive arguments online about these things. Even though I do hate the Xbots who post stuff about PS3 all over the net, the console they're defending, the 360, is a respectable machine and it has only got a better games line-up than PS3 because it's been out for about two years now.

Ian Bond, email

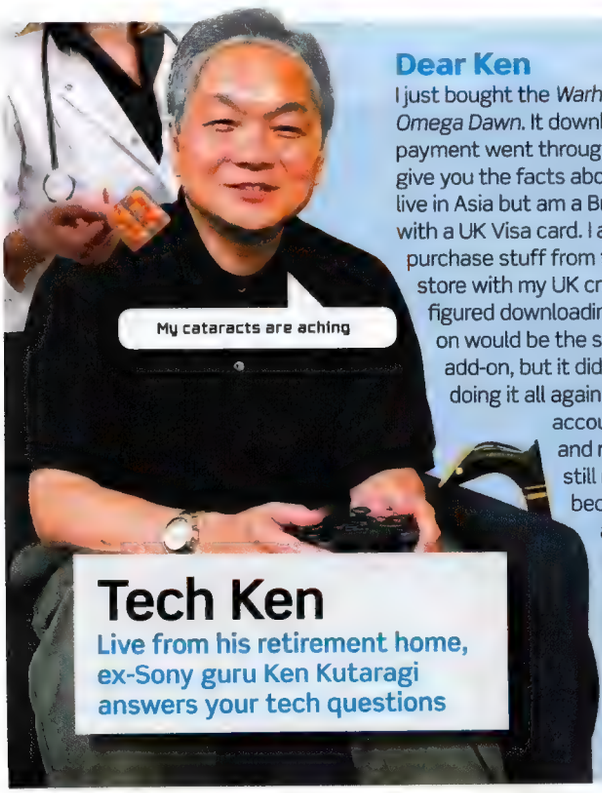
You see, your first mistake is getting involved with online arguments about which console is best. Calling them 'arguments' in the first place is a disservice to serious debates everywhere, they're just endless slagging matches that lead nowhere and come to no real conclusions. The best thing to do is ignore the 'Xbots' (by which we assume you mean fanboys) and enjoy your PS3.

Ace of spades

This is the first time I've ever bought your magazine because I live in Russia, and have come to London for two weeks. I have two questions about *Ace Combat 6*. When I heard that it would be an Xbox 360 exclusive I was shocked. My questions are: will *Ace Combat 6* come out for PS3? And why has *AC* gone from being a PlayStation game to an Xbox game?

Dmitry Sokolov, email

Firstly, excellent surname. Like the *MGS* guy! And secondly, we've no idea



Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

I just bought the *Warhawk* add-on *Omega Dawn*. It downloaded fine and payment went through OK. Now, to give you the facts about my setup: I live in Asia but am a British national with a UK Visa card. I am only able to purchase stuff from the UK PSN store with my UK credit card. I figured downloading this UK add-on would be the same as the USA add-on, but it did not work. I tried doing it all again through account management and reinstalling, but still no joy. Is it because the UK add-on won't work with the US game?

Ted Duran, email

"Whaaa...? Yer email ain't very clear, lad. But I assume from that last sentence that yer have the American version of the game; in which case, the UK add-on probably won't work."

Dear Ken

I can't figure out how to install the themes on your disc!

Loads of you, email

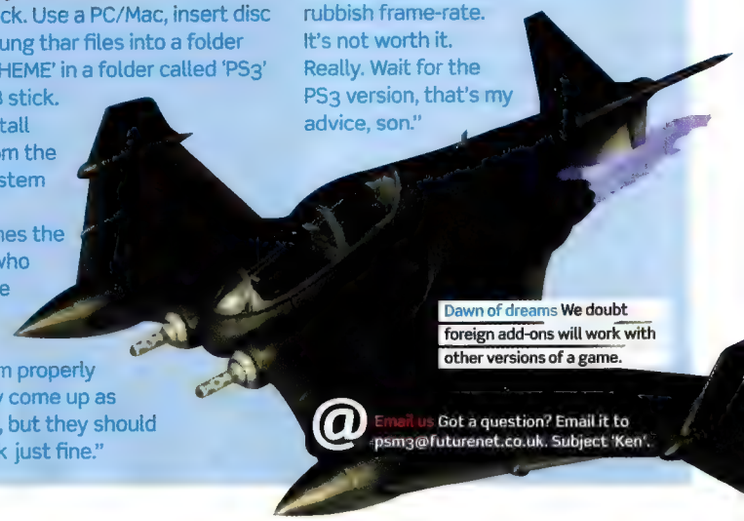
"Oh, 'eck. Use a PC/Mac, insert disc Side B, bung thar files into a folder called 'THEME' in a folder called 'PS3' on a USB stick. Then install them from the PS3's system menu. Sometimes the people who made the themes don't name 'em properly and they come up as 'sample', but they should still work just fine."

Dear Ken

I saw a video on the Internet of a man streaming a PC game to his PS3. It was *Crysis* and I really want to play that. How easy is this?

John Tarfield, email

"Crikey, son, it's reet hard, is what it is. You have to be skilled with Linux, and even then the game runs at a rubbish frame-rate. It's not worth it. Really. Wait for the PS3 version, that's my advice, son."



Dawn of dreams **We doubt foreign add-ons will work with other versions of a game.**

@ Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Ken'.

"I waited an hour to get into a *CoD4* online match"
Tony Winslade London

why the brilliant *Ace Combat* series jumped ship. *Ace Combat 6* probably won't see the light of day on PS3, although we're not ruling it out entirely; other Xbox 'exclusives' like *Lost Planet* have, after all, made it to our console. Although there is talk of a new *Ace Combat* game on PSP.

Method actor

I am amazed by how much *Drake's Fortune* is like a film. The cut-scenes are better than some movies I have paid to see in the cinema. I think it must be the acting because the characters are very convincing. Or maybe it is the motion capture, because their movement is so smooth and lifelike. I think too many games have lifeless characters and it makes you care less about the actual game as a result because you have no motive to go on. Come on developers, spend more time creating believable characters instead of stupid minigames or realistic graphics.
Peter Watts, email

We totally agree, Pete. It's rare that a game is as accomplished cinematically as *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. It's not quite on par with, say, an Oscar-winning film, but it's not hard to believe that in five years digital actors will be able to convey as much emotion as Robert De Niro. Just take a look at Quantic Dream's forthcoming *Heavy Rain*, with its staggeringly realistic digital actress. It's incredibly impressive.

Act your age We need more heroes like Drake. Heroic, yet with human qualities.

UK myspace a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world

Val

ABOUT HIM
"I'm fun and a good mate."

INTERESTS
Music: "Pop, dance hall, reggae, jazz, rock, basically all types." Films: "Scarface, Rocky, Cape Fear, Battle Royale, Highlander, The Longest Yard, Borat."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Oblivion, Ninja Gaiden

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
He found one of our 'golden belt' WWE covers of PSMgo and so he's going to Wrestlemania. And for his pic with Aisleyne from Big Brother.

Live Forever

ABOUT HIM
"I am a comical genius and the King Of Wit. My hero is myself as there is only one me."

INTERESTS
"Playing PS3, although slightly less as I've got back into MSN and MySpace, and I've gone back to playing guitar. I'm learning how to play A7X at the moment."

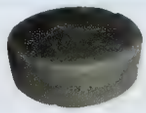
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Guitar Hero 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because we recognise him from our PSN friends list. We also like his modesty and how he never blows his own trumpet.

Casper

ABOUT HIM
"I work in my local cinema, blowing stuff up. But don't tell the boss. I love to have a laugh."

HOBBIES
"Playing ice hockey is one of my favourite things to do."



CURRENTLY PLAYING
NHL 08, Kane & Lynch

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because of his magnificent hair. Although we suspect it's not his actual hair, but rather some kind of comedy wig.

Ad@m

ABOUT HIM
"I was born on Christmas Day. I love hip-hop music."

INTERESTS
"Football, basketball, trainers (Nike Air Force Ones), hip-hop, cars. I like Ludacris, T.I., Lil Wayne, Kanye West, Run DMC. I also like The Godfather, Scarface, Pulp Fiction and The Fast And The Furious."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
PES 2008, Def Jam Icon

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he was born on Christmas Day – which means he might be the Messiah, or something. Probably.

Dr. Craig

ABOUT HIM
"I'm Craig, but I have other names – like Gregory and David Baddiel."

WOULD LIKE TO MEET
"Kriss Akabusi, David Hasselhoff, Chuck Norris, Bob Ross, Gene Wilder, Sub Zero – he is the essence of cool – Neil Buchanan. And Kelly Brook, or any hot woman. That could get messy."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Call Of Duty 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he made us imagine a dinner party attended by all his 'would like to meets'. How amazing would that be?

Phil

ABOUT HIM
"Not much to say other than I love PS3 and Chelsea."

MUSIC
"Nirvana, System of a Down, The Doors, Prodigy, Fatboy Slim, Green Day, Metallica, Jimmy Eat World, Silverchair, Cooper Temple Clause, Gorillaz, Subways, The Offspring."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Call Of Duty 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because of his scary photo, mainly. But also because PS3 was "the best thing he bought, ever." We like enthusiasm.

Parasite_God_666

ABOUT HIM
"I like PS3, my bass guitar, Final Fantasy, LP and vinyl collecting, my PS3, and my girlfriend."

FILMS
"Final Fantasy: Advent Children, Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within, The Fifth Element, The Devil's Rejects, The Black Dahlia, Donnie Darkie, The Corpse Bride."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Call Of Duty 4, Folklore

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he admits to liking FF: The Spirits Within. We love that film, and it breaks our heart when people pan it. Well, nearly.

Kenneth

ABOUT HIM
"I'm a young man from Denmark who likes hanging out with friends and playing the guitar."

MUSIC
"Linkin Park, Metallica, Mew, Dune, Nightwish, Christina Aguilera, Tim Christensen, Michael Jackson, Green Day."

CURRENTLY PLAYING
Burnout Paradise, Uncharted

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8
Because he's the first Danish PSM3 reader we've heard of. Certainly not for his love of Linkin Park. They're *awful*.

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome you onboard sharpish.

You What?

As a long time reader I think your magazine is slipping. There is no reason to read more PlayStation Classics articles. Like the *Manhunt* one – I already played *Manhunt* when it came out.
Azz Wallis, email

Even if you played Manhunt, the idea of the Classics articles are to remind you why a certain game was so special, and why it's worth revisiting. And if you never got round to playing a game in the first place, it's good to give you something to play from PlayStation's massive back catalogue.
I can't connect my PS3 to the Internet and I think I'm missing out on a lot of these PSN games. Will Sony ever release a compilation of them on a normal, shop-bought disc?
Sid, London

We doubt it, but that's a good idea for people yet to go online with their PS3. A bargain-priced package of all the best PSN games could sell quite well.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done

Long running This game's critical reception was very varied.

The Darkness

Andrew won't let a few minor technical difficulties spoil his fun

Reader Profile

Name **Andrew Milne**
Details **Well... Andrew never sent us his personal info. When you submit reader reviews, can you all *please* ensure you tell us your name, address, fave games and interests? And include a photo? Ta.**

The Darkness is a superbly atmospheric game that had me enthralled from the very beginning. Its strongest attribute has to be the brilliant storyline. The tale of Mafia mobster Jackie Estacado's vendetta against his ruthless uncle Paulie, coupled with his internal battle with the titular demoniac force inside him. The story seethes with both human emotion and a sense of the apocalyptic, and what's more, the narrative never feels unnecessarily contrived or compromised for the sake of gameplay; it flows effortlessly, carried along by the excellent dialogue and voice-acting right up to the finale.

That said, the story is far from the only thing *The Darkness* has going for it. Gunplay is perfectly solid, if a bit bog-standard, but that's before you factor in the incredibly cool Darkness powers. Some say they're poorly implemented, but I don't take that view; I think that if you take the time to master them and use them creatively, the Darkness powers can be unparalleled mechanisms of mass murder. Brandishing a car with the Darkness tentacle in order to clear a path through a blockade of clueless gangsters gave rise to a maniacal laugh or two from me. It's short – maybe seven hours – but considering the variety of what you do in that time, it's endlessly rewarding.

The Darkness isn't perfect, I'll be the first to admit that. The graphics are a bit angular and the physics engine leaves a lot to be desired. But when all is said and done, there are plenty of games that let you gun down dirty crooked cops – how many let you gut them on a demonic tentacle from Hell and hurl them the length of footie pitch? Exactly. **Andrew Milne**

Reader Verdict

The short length doesn't ruin the visceral, varied gameplay at all.

90

Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Call Of Duty 4

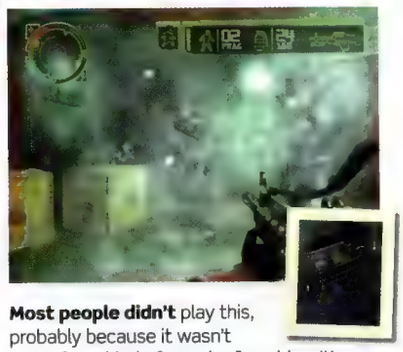
Unsurprisingly, you all love this

This is the latest and by far the best game in this series so far. The past three games have been set in Europe during WW2, and although good they have lacked that oomph. You were always just some random soldier with a rifle, going through bland fields shooting Nazis. In this one, many things have been improved. The storyline is quite good for a war game and you play as two characters, an SAS operative and a US Marine. The locations are very varied and action packed. The weapons have been vastly improved, and are very realistic and all have their own advantages. Online mode is great too, with innovative maps and customisable weapons. And with Prestige mode you can rise in rank again and again for what seems like forever. **James Halsey**

95

Project Snowblind

A quality shooter plucked from obscurity



Most people didn't play this, probably because it wasn't part of any kind of popular franchise. It's a tactical FPS set in the same universe as the *Deus Ex* games. In fact, it was originally going to be a *Deus Ex* game before the name was changed. In it you play a soldier who can 'augment' himself with bio-modifications that unlock various abilities, including extreme speed, increased strength and being able to control remote spy drones to scout out the area ahead. There were some nice graphical effects in the game, especially the rain, and it was really quite solid. The only problem was that some of the levels were a bit linear, and the environments got repetitive. It was all dark cities and grey corridors. But this was a great game. **Sid Taylor**

88

"Deal with the microscopic drama inside your body."
Stephen Armstrong Northern Ireland

Disgaea
Mind-breaking strategy RPG classic

There are so many lame RPGs on PS2, it's hard to know what ones are worth investing time in. But this is definitely one of them. Some people might not like the old school 2D visuals and simple animations, but I think they have a nice charm – and it doesn't really matter anyway because this game has incredible depth. It's a tactical RPG on an isometric grid, and you have to use your turns to defeat the enemy as efficiently as you can. You have so many abilities and powers to use, it's impossible to sum up the huge scale in a review. You can create your own team of unique characters, the game's level cap is 99,999 and there are more side-quests than I can think of. If you dedicate a lot of time to this and are patient with it, it's one of the best RPGs you'll ever play. **Dan Yorke**

91

PSM3 You were so right!
Reader love

"Totally agree with your review, this is a really amazing game indeed."
ADHD, email

Uncharted
We said "Uniquely entertaining, if cliched at times. Still, another reason to own a PS3."
PSM96 | Andy Kelly | 89%

"It's OK, but got very boring towards the end. I lost interest."
IMKeller, email

PSM3 You were so wrong!
Reader hate

YouTube The Video Zone
Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

Fighter Maker 2 by MJoeB

OW Here's a delightfully violent – and hilarious – 'low blow montage' from rare beat-'em-up creator *Fighter Maker*, available on PS2 in Japan. It's quite hypnotic... http://tinyurl.com/24nguf

San Andreas plane crash by johnfrommyspace

LOL Here's a frankly stunning video showing one of *San Andreas*' random AI planes crashing into CJ just seconds before he jumps off the huge ramp in the desert. Lucky he was recording, eh? http://tinyurl.com/2rulk6

Silent Hill in-joke by Knuxou

HA If you have a *Silent Hill 2* save on your memory card when you play *SH3*, Heather will spot something in a toilet, then refuse to fish it out, poking fun at James Sunderland. Chortle. http://tinyurl.com/26uen8

Call Of Duty 4 bazooka dance by Icobra1

ODD Here's a video of some blokes arsing about in *CoD4*, doing some kind of inexplicable dance routine and creating shapes out of C4 packages. It's stupid, but sort-of entertaining. http://tinyurl.com/ywjbqq

@ Email us Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a gem you want to share? Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about it.

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Sonic

Ask someone to name a game that features either NO music or NO sound effects, and you'll very likely get silence in return. That, or you'll be viciously flicked on the nose for having asked a stupid question. Sound design has always been absolutely vital, providing us with as much feedback and atmosphere as the visuals themselves. Where would the *Silent Hill* series be without its signature soundtrack of evil, thrashing helltunes and warm guitar/piano melodies to drive our emotions throughout each game's events? Probably not still in our minds after all these years. *Vice City* minus its excellent licensed tunes? You could lop a few tens of thousands off its sales figures, certainly.

Excellent sound design, much like exceptional visuals, can't salvage a rubbish game. But it *can* soil a great game, and make you want to shove breadsticks in your ears. *Oblivion* may feature fully-voiced dialogue throughout the entire game, but the repetition in terms of actors used soon becomes obvious and can really burst your bubble. The gobbledegook character speech in *Okami* is cute, but could get so irritating that it made some stop playing. The upside is, of course, that accomplished sound enhances your experience no end, to the point that hearing a certain sound effect or

Why sound makes or breaks a game – and how to get it right

Adventure

ditty can bring all your feelings about a much-loved game flooding happily back.

The quality of gaming audio is improving all the time, even if it rarely gets the props it deserves. As well as producing bullet pings and violin solos to the standard expected of hi-def hardware, sound teams often successfully manage to answer some pretty tricky questions: just what noise does a dragon make when you shoot it with a make-believe laser rifle from the distant future? How do you use music to capture the atmosphere of eras and places gamers have never been to, or not actually exist? And what if the player may spend anywhere between five and 50 minutes listening to it? Somehow, sound designers make it all work, and we celebrate the finest examples over the next four pages, while pointing out the not-so-fine, and more. As usual, let us know if you agree.

10 best audio innovations

Well-judged sound effects and musical scores can make a good game *great*. Here are the Sony classics that got it right...

1 Resident Evil 4

Sure, the chainsaw-wielding sackhead in *Resi 4* looks creepy, but it's the whirr of his chainsaw that creates laxative levels of unrest. Maybe it's because we're used to the screeches and yells of the Ganado villagers. Maybe it's because it only takes a single slip-up to see Leon murdered in one vicious, bloody swoop. Maybe it's just a hangover from Texas Chainsaw Massacre. But hearing that throaty, god-awful rumbling somewhere in the distance still reduces players to jelly.

2 Rez

Where the music *is* the game

Dismiss it as a wanky one-trick pony if you like, but there's no denying the power of *Rez*'s audio-visual synchronisation, a shooter where the shooting *is* so much a part of the music. Locking on to enemies, releasing bullets and seeing them destroyed – it's a collection of bleeps and snare-thumps that turn sound effects into the soundtrack. In fact, once you zone out and start to melt into the game's trance-like world, you'll find yourself doing your very best to attack your foes in time with the tune's beat, because the payoff is so damned gratifying – and you become the Class A equivalent of a one-man band, of course.

3 Silent Hill 2

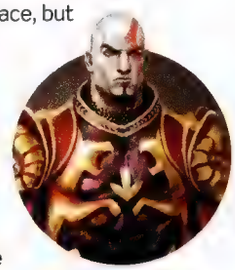
***That* hallway scene dialogue**

Silent Hill 2, like most games in the series, is a masterclass in audio atmospherics, forever aiming to unsettle and deceive on levels both subtle and aggressive. But it's a straightforward psych-out touch that sticks in the mind like an email attachment labelled 'tubgirl.jpg' that you wish you'd never opened. On the final corridor walk to meet his 'dead' wife Mary, James Sunderland is treated to a lengthy stream of dialogue that once took place between them. It can be quite harrowing giving the revelations about their past relationship. The game doesn't *force* you to stay and listen to it. But you will...

4 God Of War 2

Soundtrack perfection

Orchestra-quality soundtracks are becoming commonplace, but *God Of War 2*'s score reinforces its epic settings with a booming, rousing score that's powered by four separate composers. It blares without sounding like a cacophony, and is applied with expert timing, heralding the on-screen action like a red carpet fit for Zeus himself.



5 Black

Redefining violent sound effects

Black's 'gun porn' tag is well earned, but you'd best not Google that phrase in order to find out more. It took ballistic booming to a whole new level, featuring shotgun blasts that would echo, seconds later, on distant mountains. Its AK47 took a whole fortnight to tune to the right balance of realism and action-movie excess. A variety of animal noises were very nearly involved at one point, y'know.

6 God Hand

Sublime audio/visual synching

It's easy to dismiss *God Hand* for being a daft punchline of a beat-'em-up, but the 'It's hard! But fair!' tag that accompanied the game's promo trailers rings utterly true. Every enemy attack is accompanied by an audio prompt, allowing you to dodge

any off-screen sucker-punches that come your way. Underneath its gibbering surface, *God Hand* is anything but sloppy.

7 Ico

Listen to the wind blow...

Aside from ghostly waif Yorda, you'll never have much company on your travels through this legendary adventure. Except there's one companion that's constant: the wind. It doesn't just howl when you're exploring outdoors, but is forever whistling and moaning through the castle's walls when indoors, rippling Ico's tunic and always reminding that you've been abandoned in a cold lonely place indeed.

8 Burnout 2: Point Of Impact

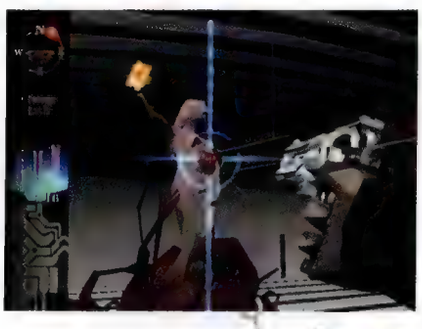
Music that *you* control

It's not so much the explosive whine of letting rip with a full boost bar that sticks in your head. It's the fact that it's accompanied by a sudden increase in the volume of the music that perfectly encapsulates the rush you feel on unleashing a turbo, and drives you to keep up the speed with further boost chains by gleefully piledriving into streams of oncoming traffic. At which point there's a cacophony of mangled metal.

9 Killer7

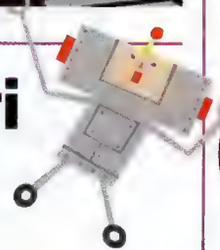
This is what the nuthouse sounds like

A menagerie of demented noises and psychotic cackles, *Killer7* sets out its sonic stall before the game's even properly begun. As the first mission begins, you're required to take a shot at a silhouette of your assassination target – pull the trigger, and you'll get your nerves jumpstarted by an explosion of blood and a shrill scream that your mother would never approve of.



10 We Love Katamari

Its candied world is packed with cutesy sound effects, but it's the satisfying PLOP-PLOP-PLOP of objects becoming stuck to your Katamari ball that's the most pleasing. Steamrolling into a crowd of objects only to be rewarded with what sounds like a puppy playing with bubblewrap is a pat-on-the-head treat your inner gamer can't resist.



Celebrity voices: the best and worst

Celebrities can lend genuine talent and authority to a voice acting role (Samuel L Jackson in *GTA: SA* for example) but, just as often, they're only there to add another chest-beating bullet point to the press release. Who enhances dialogue, and who's simply a dire log? Find out with the PSM3 Celeb-o-Voice-o-Actor-o-Meter. That's, er, the thing below.

Oscar

Who? Ray Liotta
Pretending to be... Tommy Vercetti in *GTA: Vice City*.
Did you see Liotta's Heineken ads? If you'd played *Vice City*, he *was* Tommy Vercetti, such was the excellence of his nailing the infamous *Grand Theft Auto* lead.

Who? Brian Cox
Pretending to be... Starkweather in *Manhunt*.
A superb performance, built from 100% malevolence. It's almost a shock to confront Starkweather, and discover that he *isn't* a ten-foot-tall demon.

Who? Mark Hamill
Pretending to be... Goro Majima in *Yakuza*.
A good effort from Herr Skywalker, given just how disturbingly, simultaneously pally and psychotic Majima was in the original Japanese voice track of *Yakuza*.

Emmy

Who? Tom Baker
Pretending to be... John Gray in *Cold Winter*.
Heavyweight thesp makes for a great nemesis in this overlooked FPS. Baker's also a fine choice as narrator of *Ecco The Dolphin: Defender of the Future*. Really.

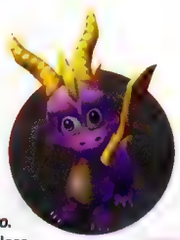
Who? Patrick Stewart
Pretending to be... Uriel Septim in *Oblivion*.
A typically stellar turn from the man who everyone wishes was their dad. Shame he has fewer lines than the London Underground, then.

Snaaaaake!

Who? Dwight Schultz
Pretending to be... Harman Smith in *Killer7*.
A-Team's Howlin' Mad Murdoch doesn't do a bad job, but hardly anyone seems to have noticed. Which is basically a not-so-good job.

Who? Michael Madsen
Pretending to be... Detective Jack Frozenski in *NARC*.
Adding Madsen to your crap crime game won't salvage it. See also: *Driv3r* and *True Crime: Streets Of LA*. *Reservoir Dogs* was infinity years ago, y'know.

Darwin Award



Who? Elijah Wood
Pretending to be... Spyro in *Legend of Spyro*.
The most pointless piece of prestige casting around. Any one of the PSM3 team could do a decent make-believe dragon voice, for a millionth of the fee.

Best Soundtracks

Six of the greatest videogame soundtracks ever

If you're going to be spending however many dozens of hours with a game, then you deserve to be treated to something a little smarter than a glorified movie soundtrack looping away in the background...

GTA: Vice City

Sure, having an '80s jukebox on tap is indeed a great thing, but it's the use of such tunes during cut-scenes – such as Mr Mister's 'Broken Wings' in the opening cinematic – that truly sets the tone.

Metal Gear Solid 3

A ladder climb that just goes on and on... and on. Weird. *Boring*, even. And then, the game's main theme tune slowly fades in, and suddenly reaching the top of that ladder becomes the most important thing ever. Genius.

God Hand

The power of game soundtracks is that they can be whatever the hell they want to be. *God Hand*'s obscene mash-up of styles is nonsense, but makes so, so much sense given the rest of the game. Bravo.

Tomb Raider

Soundtracks can carry so much more impact when used sparingly. The timing and rarity of *Raider*'s tunes was often music to your eyes, synched up with the big reveal of the game's most impressive locations.

Shadow Of The Colossus

Music that switches pace and mood as you go through the motions of bringing down each Colossus: the approach, the battle and the kill. It's a core part of the experience, and not just backdrop.

Ridge Racer

The *RR* soundtracks are an institution of camp, hi-NRG electronic tunes that no-one would *ever* dance to. But a *Ridge Racer* game without them just isn't *Ridge Racer*, such is the goodness of their fit.

Future of PS3 audio

7.1 surround sound – and why you need it

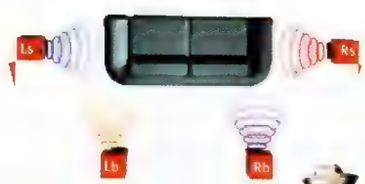
Your PS3 supports 5.1 surround sound as standard. *Killzone 2* will support 7.1 surround sound, as can any other Blu-ray product. You've only got two ears. Buh?

Why would I ever need seven (and one-tenth) speakers dotted around my room?
7.1 surround uses four rear speakers instead of just the two used by 5.1 surround. This creates a more natural soundfield, and gives you a truer sensation of the movement and location of sounds that are directly 'behind' you. And a game like *Killzone 2* is a better argument for that than a typical movie, offering a clearer indication of any threats that may be creeping up on you.

Q. What do I need to make this happen?
A. Well, you're going to need an optical cable to hook your PS3 up to your surround sound's receiver unit – you can buy those at virtually any electronics store, and expect to pay about a fiver. More importantly, you're going to need a 7.1 compatible surround sound system – it's going to need to pack either Dolby Digital Ex or Dolby Pro Logic IIx tech in order to pump out the 7.1, so check for those logos – and they're still quite expensive. Nor do they yet come bundled as 'home theatre' kits complete with speakers – you're most likely going to have to buy a standalone, high-end receiver unit that's capable of much more than you need it to be, and get the speakers and sub-woofer separately.

Q. Do I have to have a HDTV in order to use surround sound?
A. Nope. Your PS3 is hooked up directly to a surround sound system, which can be configured independently of the display settings via the console's dashboard.

Q. How do I make best use of such a system, then?
A. It's going to be at its weakest if you sit somewhere with your back close to a wall. Otherwise, you could start by following the outline detailed below in a diagram taken from Dolby's own site. The backmost speakers needn't be fixed in that position, however – it's best you angle them around (symmetrically, of course) to the place that offers the most convincing sound, depending on the height of the speakers (head height is best, but not always possible), and the acoustics of your front room etc.



License to thrill The Onkyo TXSR505E is the kind of receiver you'll be needing. It costs about £250.

Q&A

Graeme Norgate, sound designer, Free Radical

The man behind *Haze* and *TimeSplitters'* music reveals the secrets of excellent audio

What's been your favourite game soundtrack to work on, and why?
I've been told by my PR department to say *Haze*. No, really, it has to be *TimeSplitters 2*. It might be rose-tinted specs but there was so many different genres in that game, the FMVs were all very silly and fun to do, and I recorded a load of people dying by getting them drunk on a Saturday afternoon in an East London studio.

Why did you end up producing music for videogames, instead of, say, producing scores for movie or television?
There were two things I've wanted to do in my life. Play videogames and write music. Scores for videogames are much more fun than TV or movies. I don't see games as a stepping stone to films because I enjoy my job too much.

What are you aiming to provide for the player with your music?
I aim to make the player feel the way I used to when I first got into videogames, when I would often buy a game because of the soundtrack regardless of the game itself. I'd try and be good at a game just to hear the end of the track.

Do you think there's an ideal length for a piece of game music to be?
There's never an ideal length, as with many things in life, the longer the better. As a rule, shorter than two to three minutes means the music could loop too often. That said, I've probably racked up a good year playing *Super Bomberman* on the SNES – and that tune was 16 bars long, it was an infuriatingly catchy one.

How do you decide on the theme of a piece of music, and at which stage of a level's completion is the music created?
The theme is usually guided by the environment plus what part of the story the player is at this time. If it's a snowy Russian military base, there's going to be some choir, brass, snare drums... throw in some windchimes to emphasis coldness. When a piece is written can vary. Ideally, it would be once the level location is done. That's not always practical in reality so I'd rely on the design documents detailing gameplay events, location descriptions, that sort of thing.

What are the biggest non-gaming influences on your work?
Strongbow. That's actually a lie, it would be various composers I respect from a wide spread of genres. I've always loved mixing styles together, so I could listen to something by John Barry and then the Prodigy and think, "I wonder what those two styles would sound like mixed together."

EDGE
THE FUTURE OF XBOX 360
Has Microsoft's console already passed its peak?
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How LittleBigPlanet will transform gaming on PS3
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The state of racers – by the people making them
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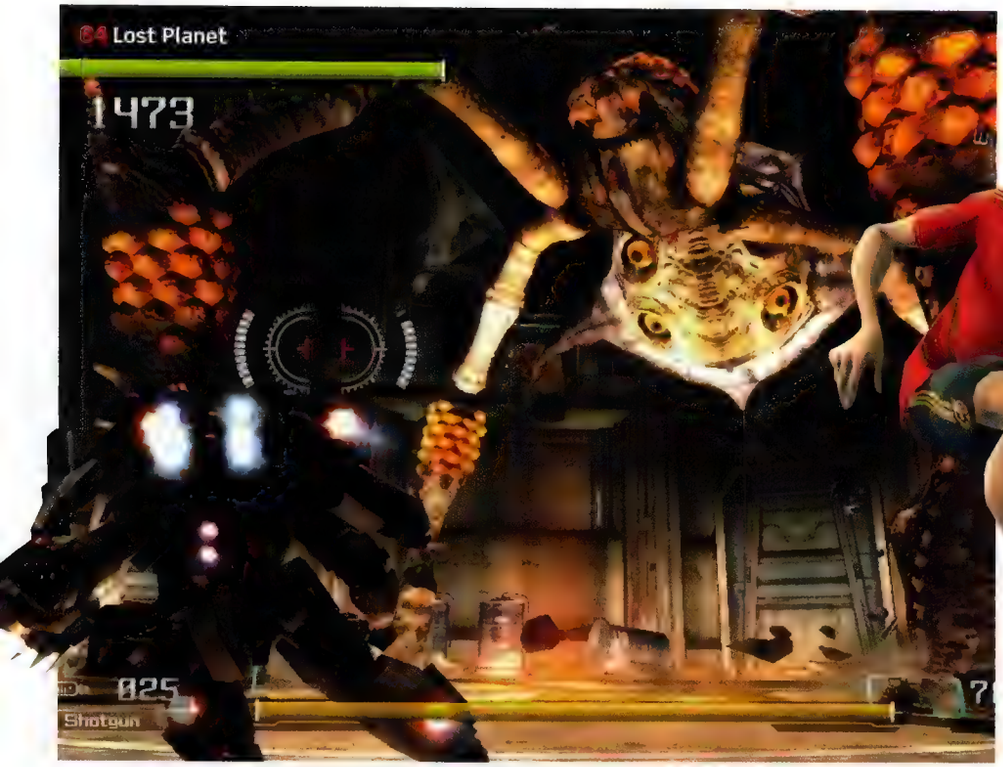
PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice



68 FIFA Street 3

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Sky Diving	81

"Dispensing with the squad mechanic is staggeringly misjudged"

Conflict: Denied Ops page 74

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29
Rubbish
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49
Poor
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69
All right
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84
Good
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89
Superb
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

90+
Amazing
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

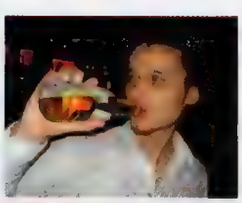
PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

Yeah, we're photogenic. Why we haven't got modelling deals baffles us...

Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, Free-roaming depravity
Playing *GTA IV:* "Well, I'm replaying it in my mind, OK?"



Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, slowly destroying his liver.
Playing *Patapon:* "The music... won't stop... help me..."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, fainting in the sun's heat.
Playing *Lost Planet:* "Cold is *far* better for my delicate emo skin."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, some sort of arms-only dance.
Playing *Conflict:* "My new dance is more fun. Watch me jive!"

Steve Bailey
Specialist in RPGs, getting a hoodie to be down with the kids.
Playing *Disgaea:* "I iz lovin' dis mad shit. Pass the cider, bruv."

Kath Brice
Specialist in Platformers, ignoring passing elephants.
Playing *Pain:* "Elephant? Liar. Look, I'm *not* turning around..."

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

PS3

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-16

ON THE DISC

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

Xbox shooter lukewarm on PS3

KNOW IT NOW

- **Screen-filling alien turtles?** ☑
- **A lead character called Wayne?** ☑
- **An ever-depleting energy bar?** ☑
- **Any sense of gameplay depth?** ☒

Lost Planet was released on Xbox 360 over a year ago, but it looks *worse* on PS3. The conversion process has blurred the game's textures – especially the once-subtle snow effects – and its frame rate stutters when larger enemies fill the screen. Capcom promise that both aliasing and slowdown are being addressed, but even if the conversion were perfect, we still wouldn't be huge fans of *Lost Planet*. It's a simple shoot-'em-up, remarkable only for a handful of epic boss battles and the flashy mech suits.

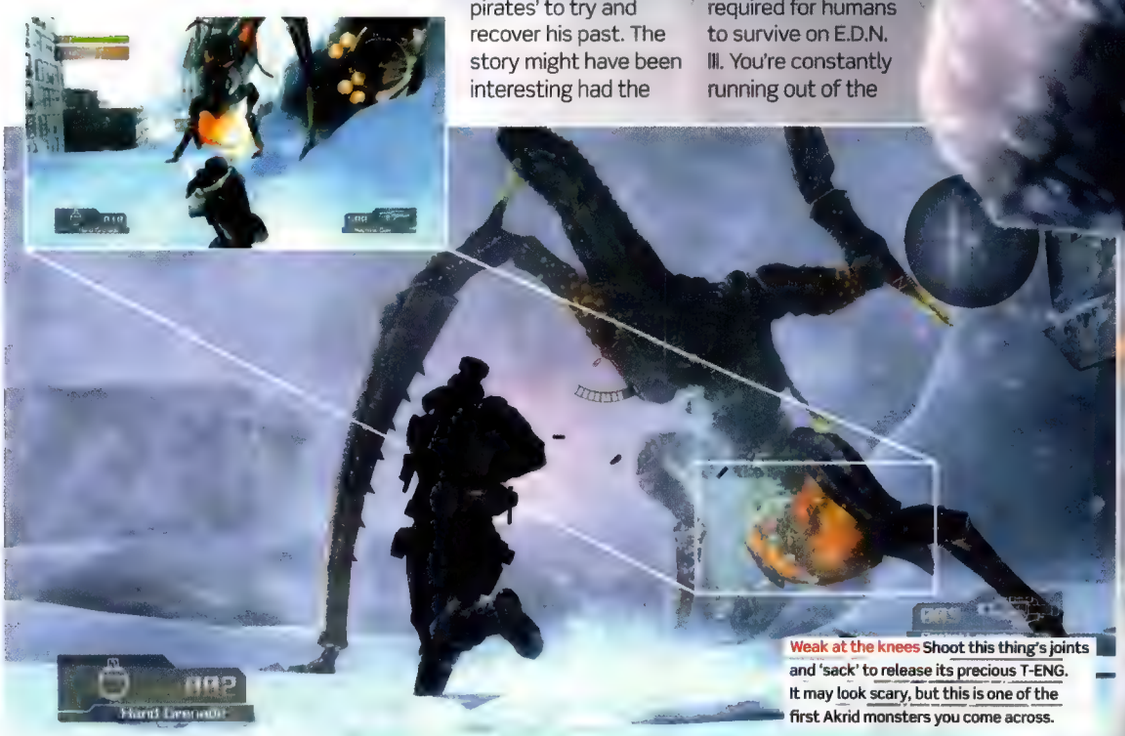
Set in the snowy wastelands of E.D.N. III, a human-occupied planet overrun by a vicious alien species known as the Akrid, you play as Wayne (yes, *Wayne*) an amnesiac soldier who joins a gang of 'snow pirates' to try and recover his past. The story might have been interesting had the cut-scenes not been so poorly-written and badly-acted, and the characters are mostly plastic-faced mannequins with little discernable personality.

Robot bores

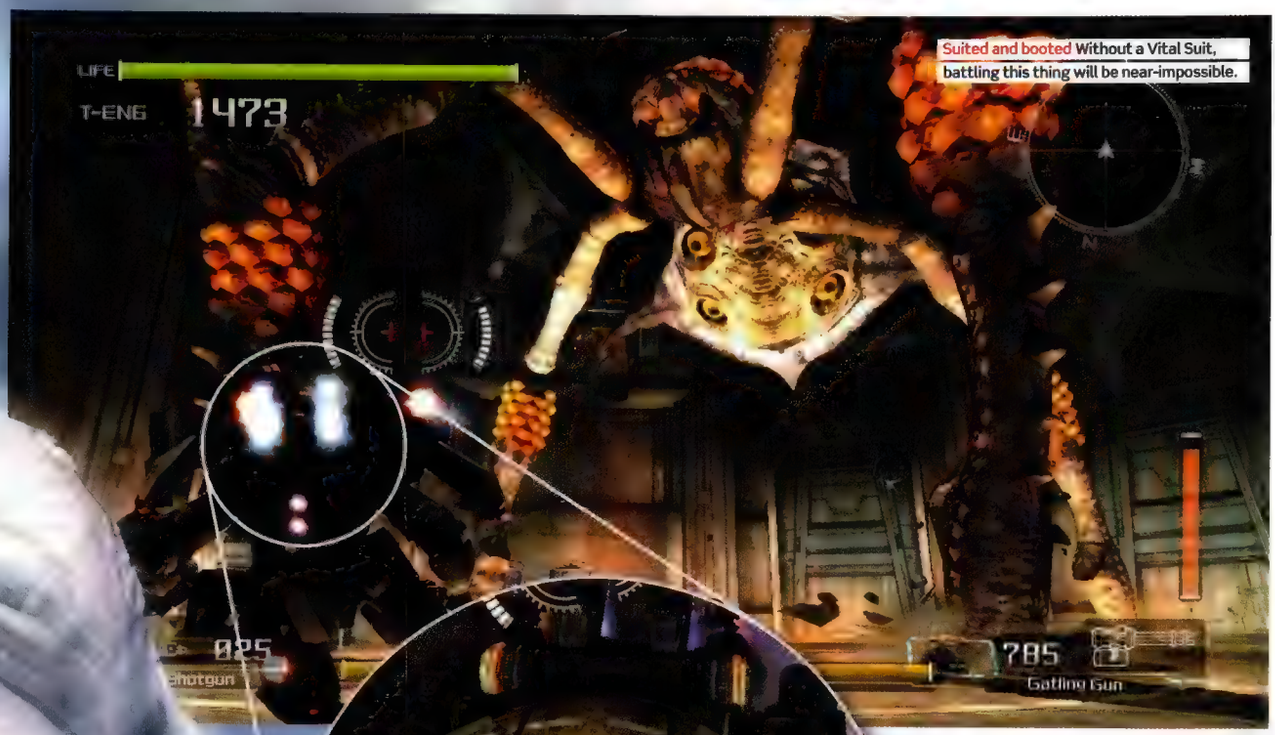
Daft story aside, you just want to shoot things and clump around in giant robots – and there's plenty of that in *Lost Planet*. The game's main currency is T-ENG, or thermal energy, a substance required for humans to survive on E.D.N. III. You're constantly running out of the stuff and have to keep it topped up by defeating Akrid, who are *very* protective of it. This gives each level a sense of urgency, because if you run out of T-ENG your health starts to deplete rapidly – but it also can prove incredibly annoying. Some people like the idea and consider it one of the game's most novel features, but we're not keen. It's too much like hard work.

But when you're not scrabbling around for T-ENG, you're killing pirates and aliens, and this is where *Lost Planet* impresses the least. The aiming feels chuggy and the inclusion of two 90° spin quick-aim shortcuts on the shoulder buttons doesn't help, unless there's an enemy *directly* to your left or right.

The Vital Suits are fun, mind. These are Japanese anime-style mechs that you can stomp around in and attach



Weak at the knees Shoot this thing's joints and 'sack' to release its precious T-ENG. It may look scary, but this is one of the first Akrid monsters you come across.



Suited and booted Without a Vital Suit, battling this thing will be near-impossible.

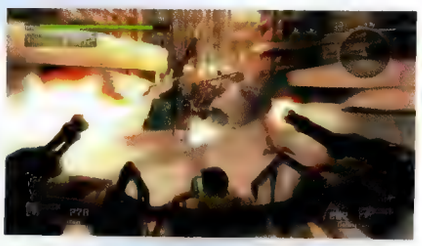
Came, saw, conquered Some Vital Suits come with melee weapons, like this whirring, red hot saw thing. You can swing it while you fire your gatling gun.

different weapons to. The standard armament is a mini-gun, but later you get access to rocket and grenade launchers. They're ultra-powerful, but it doesn't take much to destroy them, so you find yourself constantly switching between on-foot action and piloting VSs around the levels.

Suits you, sir

Some Vital Suits have retractable legs that transform into snow-mobiles. These are good for slipping through enemy lines at high speeds, although the boost jump is clumsy and you'll spend most of your time falling into pits and being forced to continue on-foot. Sometimes you're forced to battle enemy VSs without a mech – the only solution to which is to aim at the cockpit with your guns.

Standard weapons are good, ranging from generic shotguns and machine guns to gatling guns double your size. But our favourite weapons are the grenades – mainly the gum grenades which stick to enemy VSs and explode after a short period of time. Disc grenades are cool too. You throw them like a frisbee and they



View to a kill You can switch to a closer 'zoom' camera, which is similar to that of *Resident Evil 4*.

Staying alive

Wilderness survival guide

How to cope in the snowy wilds of E.D.N. III

Vital Suits You always last longer in a VS, especially against snow pirates with explosive weapons.

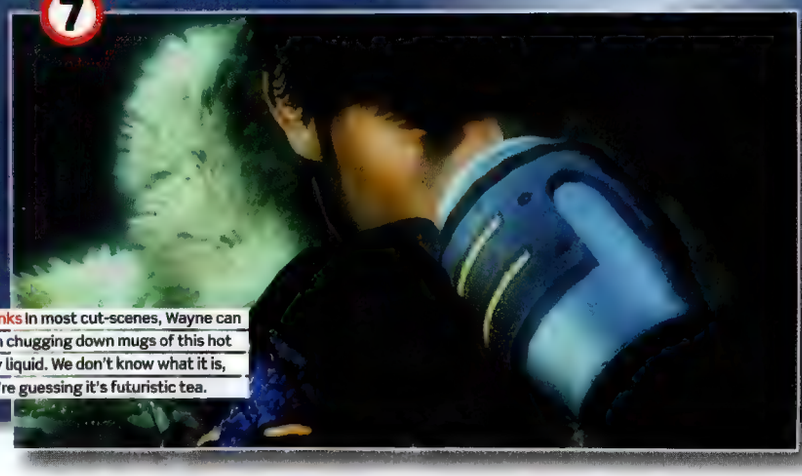
Snowmobile This VS can fold up its legs and turn into a nippy snowmobile. Use it to leap across wide gaps or just to run over enemies. It's clumsy, but useful.

T-ENG If there are no enemies around and you're running low on precious thermal energy, shoot objects in the world to reveal hidden pockets of the stuff.

Nodes Activate these orange pillars to download a map of the area to your PDA and save.

Digging Weapons and even Vital Suits can be dug out of the snow with your bare hands. Tap ◎.

Akrid nests If the Akrid just don't seem to stop coming at you, chances are there's a nest nearby. To get rid of them, chuck a grenade inside and watch it explode.



Hot drinks In most cut-scenes, Wayne can be seen chugging down mugs of this hot steamy liquid. We don't know what it is, but we're guessing it's futuristic tea.

Shake, tackle and roll To take out enemy Vital Suits, use your grappling hook to lunge towards them and then fill the pilot with hot lead. It works every time.

stick to enemies. You're never short of ammo, which makes for some delightfully explosive firefights, if making it a tad easy.

Most of *Lost Planet* involves trekking through the wasteland, destroying Akrid-spawning nests and light platforming bits, but some epic set-pieces break up the routine. In one scene you're in the middle of a vast, open snow-field being pursued by an enormous Dune-like worm. There are numerous screen-filling bosses, including a mega-sized moth in Mission Four and a tortoise the size of a bungalow.

Same old, same old

But no matter how big the enemies, *Lost Planet*'s never really more than just a button-bashing shooter, and you never really feel like you're being that imaginative – just following a defined path, killing everything you see without deviation. The game could have benefited from some more puzzle and exploration elements – especially given the size of the levels.

You can use Wayne's grappling hook to reach higher terrain – simply fire it at a surface and you'll be yanked up. This is good *when it works* – sometimes scenery is blocked by invisible barriers, which is annoying in the heat of combat.

Don't get us wrong. If we'd reviewed this on Xbox a year ago, we'd have given it an low 80% score, but the poor PS3 visuals – and presence of new rivals like *Uncharted* and *Ratchet* – diminish its impact.

It's a decent enough shoot-em-up – and multi-player is good, letting you fight both on-foot and in Vital Suits. But it doesn't have enough new ideas or a sharp enough aiming system, while the story lacks depth. It's a Capcom game at heart – but time has thawed its fresh appeal. **Andy Kelly**

Voice your concern Josh Keaton, the voice of Wayne, also played young Ocelot in *Metal Gear Solid 3*. He was in Baywatch too, apparently.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Lost Planet: Extreme Condition* contains...**
Giant aliens | Smaller aliens | Robot suits
Rubbish characters

Overall The odd mind-blowing set-piece aside, *Lost Planet* is rarely truly exciting – just functional.

69

Pub EA | **Dev** EA Big
Price £40 | **Release** Feb 22
Multi-player 1-8

ON THE DISC
We'll review *FIFA Street 3* on the next disc

Up the Villa Valencia and Spain striker David Villa is one of the hottest players in the game.

FIFA Street 3

EA's latest footie title has only enough skills to pay a couple of bills

KNOW IT NOW

Players look like the Peperami mascot? ☑
Volleys scored after doing a back-flip? ☑
Legends like Voller and Eric Cantona? ☑
Sliding tackles or free-kicks? ☒

FIFA Street is absurd, but not entirely unrealistic. For all its fancy flicks, deft touches and brilliant goals from impossible angles, it's not that different from the football you *think* you're playing while down the park with mates. Best of all, thanks to revised gameplay and new looks, *FIFA Street 3*, lets you live out your Kaka-esque dreams without the toe-curling urban 'vibez' – and dire MC Harvey commentary – of the old games.

EA Big's bombastic PS3 debut comes with a new look, turning the players into caricatures. Rooney is built like a bear with massive shoulders, a stocky chest and a pug face, and Crouch looks like he's made from a string of sausages.

Different players are put into one of four categories: Enforcers – defenders like Puyol who can tackle well, Playmakers like Kaka who can pick out more accurate passes, Tricksters that can dazzle with skills like Ronaldinho (R3 is the trick stick) and Finishers – player's of Raul's quality who can score from all over the pitch. These talents are accentuated when you fill the Gamebreaker gauge by pulling off tricks (more on these later) and activate it with L1. Each of your five players – from goalie to striker – will become even more powerful as the screen drains of colour except for the rainbow trail of the ball. Shooting (◎) is almost a guaranteed goal in this mode as long as you don't smash it straight at the keeper, so tricking your way up to this status is well worth it.

FIFA Street 3 feels more fluid, too, thanks to the silky-smooth animations and new free-running elements. The moves are tinged with an element of parkour – hold R2 to either run up and across a nearby wall with the ball still at your feet or sprint straight up it and backflip over a chasing defender. You can even vault over an opponent and perform a volley.

Trick treats

You can now juggle the ball and upset the opposition further. Tapping △ while standing still performs keep-ups using your feet, knees, shoulders and head, and for an extra bit of flair you can hold L2 to trap the ball on your shoulders or foot. The skills certainly look ace and varied, but we soon found ourselves using the same run-and-juggle technique – it easily builds up your Gamebreaker bar and makes it almost

FIFA Street 3

"Sprint up a wall and backflip over a defender"

Shoulder to style on The beautiful free-running moves allow you to run up walls – and your opponents.

Kak's magic Just like in real life, Brazilian playmaker Kaka is full of tricks and retains possession well.

impossible for the opposition to get the ball – especially when you're playing against the computer, it seems.

Bore draw

The reason we adopted this one-dimensional approach, aside from it being the simplest way to win, is because *FIFA Street 3*'s Challenge mode is dull – and you'll be keen to blast through it. Other modes offer traditionally timed-matches where the most goals wins, or matches where you can score with headers and volleys only, modes with no Gamebreakers and games with a variety of score targets to meet. You unlock new teams and players as you go, but there's no pay-off after each challenge is completed. It all feels patchy – you jump from one challenge to another without so much as seeing your players actually celebrating. And because there isn't an ultimate goal – except for unlocking new players, teams and kits – it starts to feel empty after a short while. Playing against a mate, as ever, is miles better because at least there's someone to humiliate with your mad skillz. But the single-player challenge will leave you cold.

Still, *FIFA Street 3* ticks all the boxes – and it's more accessible for ditching the hammy urban sheen. You can dip in for a quick game, but you can also go a step further and create your perfect team, tailor your play to each of your player's strengths and weakness and go up against the elite online. There's limited solo fun to suck from it, but rope some mates in and you'll be able to digitally show just how good your real-life skills are. Well, how good they are in your mind, at least. **Nathan Irvine**

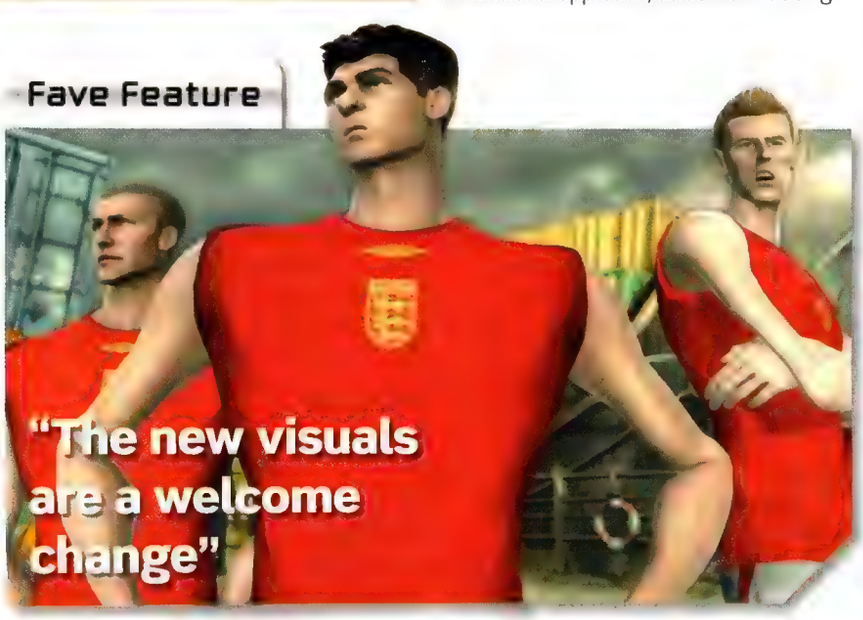
Balls up Hold ◎ when the ball is in the air and your striker will leap in slow motion and unleash a vicious volley.

Over the Roon The bulky frame of Wayne Rooney means he can bash through defenders with relative ease.

Pick a winner

A mode called Playground Picks, lets you and a mate take turns in selecting a dream team from the pool of stars.

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

FIFA Street 3 contains...

Incredible volleys | Gravity-defying gymnastics | Lots of goals

Overall It looks and plays nicely, but we prefer *NBA Homecourt* because it has more depth. Still, it's a welcome change from *PES*.

71

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Price £30 | **Release** Feb 22
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Watch *Patapon*'s gleeful insanity now
PSP/Coming Soon

I fought the claw Huge beasts like this killer crab force you to really display all of the skills you've learned. It'll drop materials for the Mater Tree once dead.

Big balls Special meats and materials are used to create unique characters like these powerful Patapons here. They'll still need to evade bad guys, though.

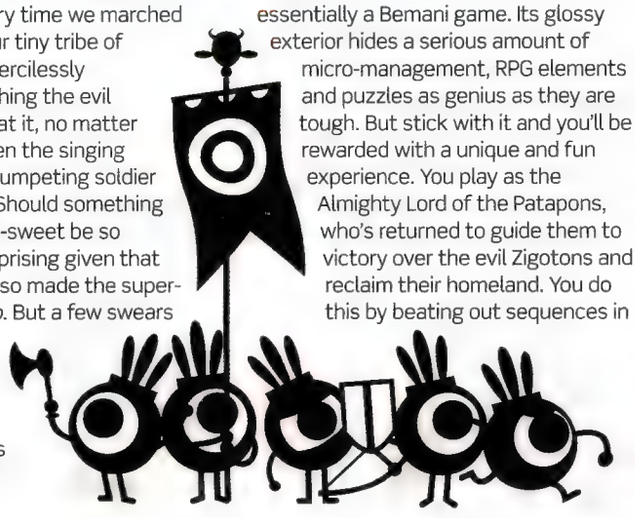
Patapon

Drumming up a storm in PSP's oddest title yet

KNOW IT NOW

An army made up of eyeball soldiers? ☑
Drum beat commands? ☑
A giant orgasmic plant? ☑
More charming than *LocoRoco*? ☒

After only a few hours play, we hated *Patapon*. Every time we marched into battle our tiny tribe of eyeballs would be mercilessly blackened by everything the evil Zigoton army threw at it, no matter what we did. Not even the singing tree and the small trumpeting soldier could lift our mood. Should something that looks this sickly-sweet be so taxing? It's more surprising given that the *Patapon* team also made the super-accessible *LocoRoco*. But a few swears and several successful missions later its quirky, strategic charms won us over.



Patapon is deceptively deep for what is essentially a Bemani game. Its glossy exterior hides a serious amount of micro-management, RPG elements and puzzles as genius as they are tough. But stick with it and you'll be rewarded with a unique and fun experience. You play as the Almighty Lord of the Patapons, who's returned to guide them to victory over the evil Zigotons and reclaim their homeland. You do this by beating out sequences in time with the music, using △ (for a 'Chaka' sound), ✕ (Don), □ (Pata) and ○ (Pon). For example, tapping □, □, □, ○ (or Pata, Pata, Pata, Pon) will make your army advance from left to right. Tap out sequences perfectly in time with the music and you'll eventually light up Fever mode. This will make your troops will become more powerful, but skip a beat and they'll curse at your sloppiness and fall over.

Drum do

New skills, like evading and powering-up, are unlocked along the way, and there are even miracle spells to learn. You can conjure these when you bang the Don drum (✕) during the Fever. A Rain miracle will unleash the obvious downpour, but it'll also sprout plants in dry places and help

In the ship The action heads out across the ocean as you get deeper into the action.

Faulty towers These vantage points might be good for the enemy, but you can topple them easily with attacks.

Sling it Use a devastating catapult to level this fortress. Smashing stuff.

It's good to talk The tiny bits of dialogue add personality to the Patapons and Zigatons. It's pretty funny in places.

you to cross hot surfaces, while the Tailwind miracle means your archer's arrows will fly further. It's not as complicated as it sounds, and the catchy chants of the Patapons will soon burn themselves into your mind as you recite them loudly as you play.

You'll spend most of your time tweaking things in the Patapon camp. Here you can shuffle your army around by – for example – bringing in long-range experts like archers or axe-wielding grunts who'll provide your first line of defence as the enemy advances. There are even cute little Patapon knights that ride horses and carry lances. And though your weapons and soldiers level up after each mission, you can still juggle their equipment around with items you find in battle, like fire-spears that set foes ablaze or sturdier armour for durability. And because you'll be razing giant fortresses to the ground, there's a devastating catapult to help. There's also the Mater Tree, which when fed with various materials (metal, wood, stone and certain meats) gives birth to new breeds of warriors.

Monster hunter There are huge, screen-filling beasts in epic boss battles. You can return to these fights at any stage to power-up your troops by overcoming them, but they will get tougher as you go.

Total madness

And when you think you've seen it all, *Patapon* throws in some quirky minigames. There's one which tasks you to tap a giant baby mountain's toes to make him laugh and drop materials for the Mater Tree, or one where you prune a huge plant, which sounds like it's in the throes of passion.

While it's not as complete as *LocoRoco* and some will find the button-tapping premise repetitive, *Patapon* is one hell of an addictive and original title. Just bear with the initial frustration and you'll soon be marching to victory. **Nathan Irvine**

Fave Feature

"Playing the trumpet for the singing tree"

PSM3 Verdict

***Patapon* contains...**

Hunting | Catapults | Drums | Killing | The most 'stick in your head' tune ever

Overall Yes, it's monotonous at times but you've never experienced *anything* like this. Completely unique.

81

Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami
Price £25 | **Release** March 1
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
We'll review *PES 2008* on the next disc
PSP/Reviews

Hey, good lookin' Graphically, Pro Evo 2008 looks very good indeed, with excellent animation and pretty decent player likenesses as well.

Button it PSP's fewer buttons mean there are slightly less controls than on the big consoles, but you barely notice.

Shoot to thrill Shot power seems oddly sensitive, so don't hold down the shoot button for too long.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

There'll be no slowdown on PSP, though, right Seabass? *Right?*

Oh, OK, so *Pro Evolution Soccer* on PSP has suffered slowdown in every one of its incarnations, but after the frame-rate debacle on PS3 we're that bit more sensitive to the jerkiness. We'd been hoping that this would be the year that handheld *PES* would be lag-free, but no – every so often, predominantly on scrambles in the box following corners, the game lurches all over the place. It's no worse than previous years, and you can sometimes go consecutive matches without noticing any problems, but it's there. And if you've played as much *PES* on PS3 as we have, it becomes even more depressing than before.

Still, it plays as excellently as ever, although it's basically a straight conversion of the PS2 version of *PES 2008*. And so, just like this year's PS2 version was almost identical to last year's PS2 version, the on-pitch action in *Pro Evo 2008* on PSP is near-enough the same as the handheld version of *Pro Evo 6*. Which means it's a terrific game, but one that suffers from over-familiarity. But there are two big new features in this year's PSP *PES*.

Cramping your style Playing *PES* on PSP still results in cramped fingers after a long session. Ouch.

League of its own

The first, and best, new addition is that you can now play Master League at home on your PSP, then transfer the data via USB to PSP and carry on playing on the bus. Then you can transfer the updated info back to your PS2. While last year you could swap updated player data and the like onto PSP, this takes it all on a step further. It means Master League could literally take over every spare minute you have. There's no way of transferring PS3 Master League data to PSP, mind you.

And the second new feature is World Tour mode, which debuted in the recent PS2 game. This sees you choose a side and then play teams from around the world to fulfil certain criteria – win by two goals, for instance, or come back from a losing position to win. You know the sort of thing. Unfortunately, here *Pro Evolution Soccer* does that all-too-familiar Master League (back again this year, of course) thing of bending the game to create its own stories. Brazil need to beat Qatar by two goals, you say? You can practically hear the game thinking "OK, we'll let Brazil go 4-1 up – and then Qatar will pull three goals back in the last ten minutes." Qatar are ranked 88th in the world, you know. Sigh. When Thailand (107th in the world) start banging in 35-yard free kicks against Man Utd, you'll be swearing so much even Wayne Rooney would blush. But as angering as all this is, it's compulsive and enjoyable enough to make you persevere.

Two's company There's multi-player Wi-Fi mode too, obviously, and it works like a charm. Essential for football-mad PSP-owning mates, really.

After all, *PES* is *PES* and no matter what frustrations surround it, the core gameplay is always quite superb – and so a portable *Pro Evo* is a decidedly Good Thing. The play mechanics are barely changed from *PES6*, however, so if you've already got that, you might want to think carefully before forking out. If not, however, this is well worth the fee at the turnstiles.

David Cook

PSM3 Verdict

***Pro Evolution Soccer 2008* contains...**
New World Tour mode | Updated player info
Slowdown | Lots of leagues

Overall Much the same in terms of gameplay, but still ace. We're not sure there's enough new here, though.

81

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Pub Eidos | **Dev** Pivotal
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Watch *Denied Ops* in hi-def

Conflict: Denied Ops

Respected war series gets new direction – downhill...

You know something has gone properly wrong with *Denied Ops* during the level in which you're mowing down swathes of terrorists in Rwanda. They're black and, if you're playing as Lang, so are you – but this doesn't stop them yelling "I will kill you, whitey!" Oh, dear.

That's only a small flaw, yes, but this new *Conflict* is ridden with small flaws that eventually come to define the experience. *Denied Ops*, as you may know, dispenses with the four-man squad shooter dynamic, replacing it with an FPS in which you control two army blokes – Graves and Lang – and near-enough does away with the strategy of old.

It is, to be brutally frank, a staggeringly misjudged move. PS3 has loads of good first-person shooters but is still in need of a squad game or three. A traditional *Conflict* would have been a great addition to the console's catalogue. Still, it wouldn't be too much of a problem if *Denied Ops* was a decent FPS. But it isn't.

The odd couple

The basic plot is 'you: heroes, them: terrorists', and you play as crack soldiers Graves and Lang. Graves is (sigh) a grizzled veteran and Lang is (groan) a wisecracking rookie whose hotheadedness is kept in check by Graves' weary cynicism. Neither are very likeable, especially Lang – he's every bit the stereotypical Hollywood idea of a 'streetwise' black rebel. He shouts, swears and doesn't play 'by the rules' – but he *gets the job done, goddammit*. He's probably the most clichéd games character ever. He's also obsessed with bottoms – every third word out of his mouth is 'ass'. "I'm freezing my ass off!" he booms. "I saved your white ass!" he hollers. We suspect he's in denial about something or other.

You can switch between Graves and Lang with ◎, and command the AI character with L1 and L2. Aiming at something and jabbing L1 orders your buddy to provide covering fire, while L2 tells him to either follow or stay put. The covering fire system works fine, but God help you if you forget to press L2 when you're leaving an area. Otherwise, you'll wander down the road and into a firefight, look to your mate for help... and discover he's not there. Press ◎ to switch to him, and you'll doubtless find he's just standing in the middle of the room you cleared out five minutes ago, gawping into space like a dazed goldfish. This happens *all the time*.

And that's it for the tactical elements. Really, you'll probably never need to use them. While you'll be in trouble if you just go charging in with Lang's high-powered guns, blasting indiscriminately (not

KNOW IT NOW

- The *Conflict* series becomes an FPS? ✓
- Massively clichéd lead characters? ✓
- One of PS3's worst-looking games? ✓
- As good as the squad-based games? ✗

Shoot to kill Rubbish character models. Rubbish environments. It's all very disappointing.

Red or dead The red tinge in the corners shows you're near death. Avoid damage and it will recede.

Conflict: Denied Ops

"And now for a word on the graphics. That word is 'appalling'"

Two's company It's split-screen mode. It works just as you'd expect, but it's as poor as the main game.

Snipe cleaner Here's a man about to be shot by Graves' sniper rifle. Unless you're lying down to shoot, the sights wobble more than a jelly on a trampoline. Hmm.

because the AI will outflank you cleverly, mind, just because enemy soldiers can take an *obscene* amount of bullets to the face before dying), if you play as sniping expert Graves it's a different story. You can simply duck into corners and behind walls, popping up to unload a couple bullets into someone's head, then taking cover again. Repeat until job done. When you do lose all your health, though, you can be healed. Here, you have two choices – switch character, find your downed companion, press ⊗ and fix him up yourself. Fine. Or stay as your near-dead bloke and hold L2 to summon your partner to your side. This rarely works, though – usually because he's half a mile away in a room you emptied of terrorists 20 minutes ago.

Bulletproof monks The opening level is set inside an abandoned monastery. Monks? Nah. Religious paraphernalia? Nah. Hordes of genero-terrorists? You betcha.

Split in two

There's split-screen multi-player, but it's no more fun with two. You're offered Campaign and Co-op modes – but we're damned if we could tell the difference. There's also online co-op play, for those that want it.

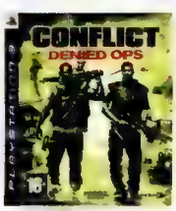
Now for a word on the graphics. That word is 'appalling' – there are PS2 FPS's, like *Black* and *Urban Chaos*, which look far better. From the diamond mines of the Congo to the wastelands of Siberia, *Conflict* offers bland, textureless environments and ugly character models.

It's not all bad

But you can drag some fun out of *Denied Ops*. It's never (even if you spend all your time sniping) too easy, the weapons are sort-of satisfying and there are rarely any bits where you just trundle through the level looking for someone to shoot. Oh, and there are vehicles as well (tanks and hovercrafts, for instance) although, to be honest, they're horrible to control. Really, if you're desperate for a 'wisecracking duo with big guns' game, *Army Of Two* is previewed on page 13. It's much better.

Every so often, when an enemy appears, Graves shouts "Hostile!" But if you spend 40 notes on this, you'll be more than hostile – you'll be bloody *furious*. **David Cook**

PSM3 Verdict



***Conflict: Denied Ops* contains...**
Clichéd characters | Lots of blasting
Little strategy | Bland environments

Overall A disastrous entry for a previously well-regarded franchise. Not even for *Conflict* nuts.

50

PS3

Pub Nippon Ichi | **Dev** Nippon Ichi
Price ¥9,240 | **Release** Out now, Japan
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Disgaea 3 is on this month's disc
PS3/Coming Soon

School's out! The homeroom is where you go to make new characters, and make requests; force is an option, if you're a rubbish politician...

Face booked It's possible to get four characters to attack at once, depending their relationships.

Team time When allies are stood close, try a team attack. These are a bigger deal than before.

IMPORT

Disgaea 3

Strategy RPG gaming to the nth degree, with a seriously sweet tooth

KNOW IT NOW

- Cute and slightly barmy anime style? ☑
- Endless strategic possibilities? ☑
- Deep enough to worry a black hole? ☑
- Groundbreaking free-roaming engine? ☒

A strategy RPG built from 2D sprites and static stages and backdrops is hardly going to push PS3's technical muscles. But *Disgaea 3* isn't about showing off. The previous *Disgaea* titles were on PS2, and could easily have been made for PSone – yet they were brilliant. *Disgaea* is about pushing a whole other kind of technical boundary, namely those of the strategy RPG format itself. While it may take up the slightest of room on a game disc, *Disgaea 3* can take up as much space in your life as *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*

Disgaea 3's lead character is Mao, a pupil at the netherworld's 'evil' high school. What with this being the demon realm, pupils graduate by being as useless, stubborn and destructive as possible – Mao, by never once having attended class, is currently the biggest swot around. And he plans to flatten the school's chairman in order to push himself to the top spot as the biggest delinquent in town. Whatever happened to saving the world? Welcome to *Disgaea* – where the good guys are bad guys, and the plot needs to inform the authorities before it's allowed to leave the house.

Entry level

If you've played a Nippon Ichi strategy RPG before, you may as well skip ahead to the next paragraph. If not, then this is what you need to know: this is turn-based combat, played out on gridded maps. You've maybe experienced this before (think *Final Fantasy Tactics*), but never like this. The thing about Disgaea is that the breadth and depth of customisation is *insane*. Strategy RPGs usually force you to play smartly because of limited resources; *Disgaea 3* is the other way around. It hands you the keys to pretty much everything, allowing you to craft ridiculously powerful characters and buffer their stats like never before. The real strategy here is how you exploit the game's framework. You know how RPGs contain loads of items – armour, weapons, etc – to equip? *Disgaea 3* lets you *enter* those items, exploring them through randomly-generated dungeons to farm for new kit and experience until your

Disgaea 3

"There's no serious grunt here, just buckets of charm and style"

Colour scheming Geostones are now everywhere, and can be used to create combo explosions for massive enemy damage and bonus items.
BONUS

heart's content. And that's just scratching the surface of the game.

Changing runes

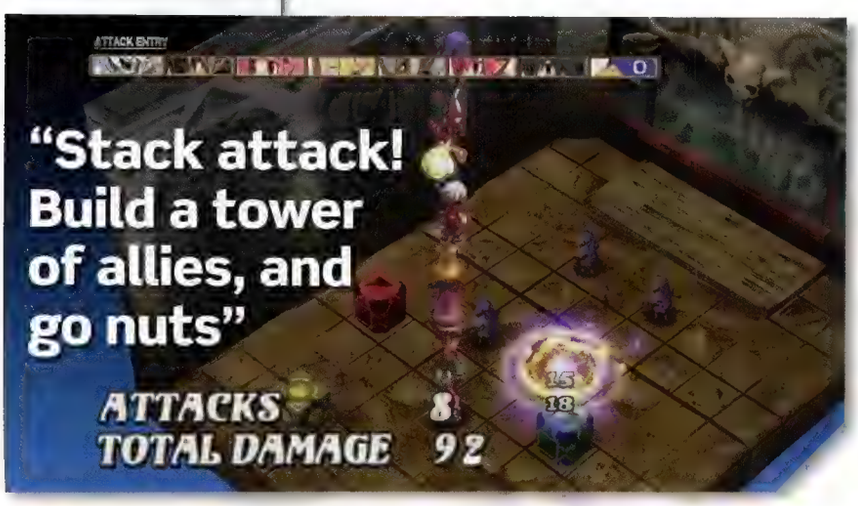
So what's new in *Disgaea 3*? Erm, not much. But, if you're a fan, you'll know the slightest of tweaks can have great ramifications. For example, monster-type allies can now transform into powerful weapons for other characters to use. The Dark Assembly – where high-ranking demons vote to open new worlds or make other changes to parts of the game – is replaced by a schoolroom, but the fundamentals are the same: come here to make new characters, rebirth existing ones into stronger forms, and more. Team attacks have funkier animations. And Geostones – objects that can affect coloured patches of the floor known as Geopanels – are everywhere, and can be used to chain explosions all over the shop.

Shop smart

The more you use *Disgaea*'s shops, the better service you'll get. The hospital even offers valuable items as reward for paying to be healed...

It's still incomparable stuff – except, of course, with any previous *Disgaea*. And that's the rub. There's no great reason for this to be on PS3, except that PS2 already has *Disgaea 1 & 2*, while PSP has a *Disgaea* rejig in *Afternoon Of Darkness*. You could choose any of those and still have a fantastic cerebral workout on a par with this. If you're a cutting-edge graphics whore, forget it – there's no serious grunt here, just buckets of charm and style. Still, we can barely fault it and simply can't resist it. It's an entertaining, consuming and unique entry into PS3's somewhat meagre RPG catalogue. Just be sure to buy in a six-pack of midnight oil. **Steve Bailey**

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***Disgaea 3* contains...**

Dazzling levels of customisation | World-champion weirdness | Madly catchy muzak

Overall To the uninitiated its improvements may seem slim, but it's still stellar for RPG stat-heads.

82

Pub Xseed Games | **Dev** SCEI
Price £30 | **Release** Feb 22
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll review *Wild Arms 5* on the next disc
PS2/Reviews

Wild Arms 5

A western-themed RPG that's far from untamed

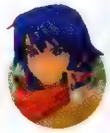
Wild Arms is one of those RPG franchises that's been gently thrumming along – scoring itself a steady stream of fans over the years, lurking on the sidelines since the PSone days while the *Final Fantasies* and *Dragon Quests* of the world soak up the glory. But it's hard to shake the feeling that *Wild Arms 5* doesn't deserve to share that limelight. Despite a fistful of neat ideas, it hardly reinvents the (wagon) wheel.

All the RPG cliches are here: random battles and turn-based combat. A story that begins with a plucky, headstrong teen that wants to see the world and achieve great things and leave his quaint, idyllic village behind. Dungeon crawls that end in boss battles. Yadda yadda. If you like your RPGs to stick to a familiar template, you'll be right at home. If you like your RPGs to stick out, then move along. While there are things that make *Wild Arms 5* stand out slightly from the crowd, these don't lift it above feeling incredibly traditional at heart.

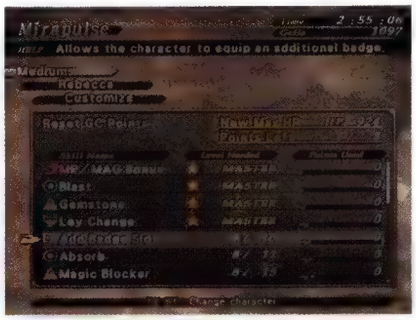
Let's talk about hex

Combat takes place on a cluster of hexagons – some containing status-boosting enhancements – with enemies and allies moving between each to attack one another. While exploring dungeons, you're given more control than most role-players offer: you can jump, slide and whip your guns out to shoot switches, pots or lock-on to hidden magic power refills. This feels pretty neat, but is tempered by puzzles centred on sliding blocks onto buttons. One thing we absolutely love, however, is the fact that your team's hit points are refilled after every battle. This cuts out a lot of needless busywork and makes things flow more smoothly; it's far from game-breaking, so please can other, future RPGs take note? Please?

Other than that, it's a game that flows along quite smoothly – unless you're turned off by the old-school format there's little to get irritated about. Visually, it may be clean and colourful – with some slick anime cut-scenes to boot – but it's far from a heavyweight. If you've spent the past few years savouring graphical gargantuans like *Kingdom Hearts II*, *Final Fantasy XII*, *Dragon Quest VIII* and *Rogue Galaxy*, you may find *Wild Arms 5* to be outdated, rather than charming, by comparison. We'd much rather see more interesting, US-released RPGs like *Dawn Of Mana*, *Radiata Stories* or *Grandia III* make the leap to the UK. But, we're not so much complaining, more making sure you keep your expectations in check. *Wild Arms 5* is basically a Stetson among role-playing games: somewhat exotic and funky, but also dangerously close to being old hat. **Steve Bailey**



Badge Cassidy
Each character can equip several badges that'll allow them to get the edge in combat, or even sniff out buried treasure in the battlefield.



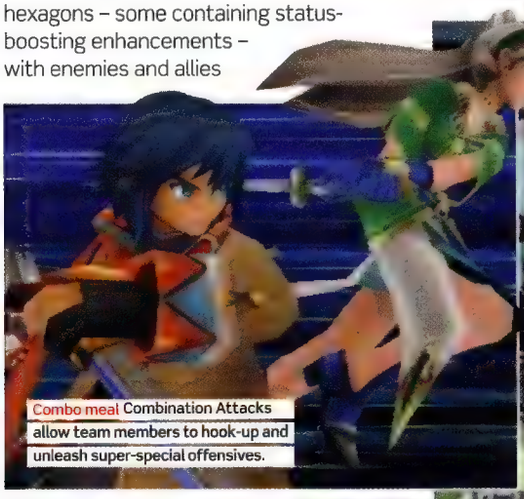
Skill-tons You can swap hit points for many new skills early on in the game, if you feel like taking the risk.

PSM3 Verdict

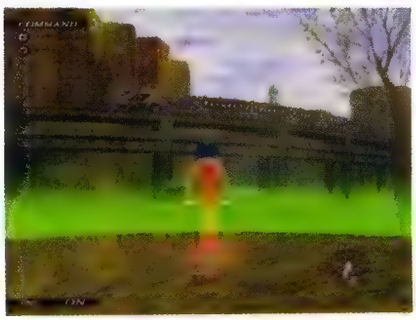
***Wild Arms 5* contains...**
Some rootin' tootin' ideas | Western-infused soundtrack | A cliched role-playing structure

Overall Perfectly decent, but an all-too-familiar outing. For raging/insatiable J-RPG addicts only.

64



Combo meal Combination Attacks allow team members to hook-up and unleash super-special offensives.



Map plans When exploring the main world, you can search for hidden chests with this radar sweep.

Tex hex You can fit all your characters into a single hexagon, but beware – any attack will now hit your whole team at once.

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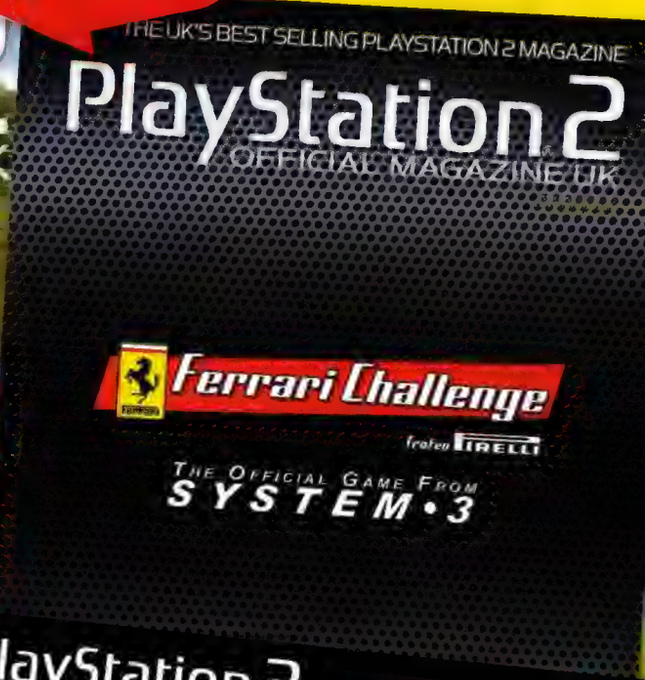

11 PLAYABLE DEMOS!

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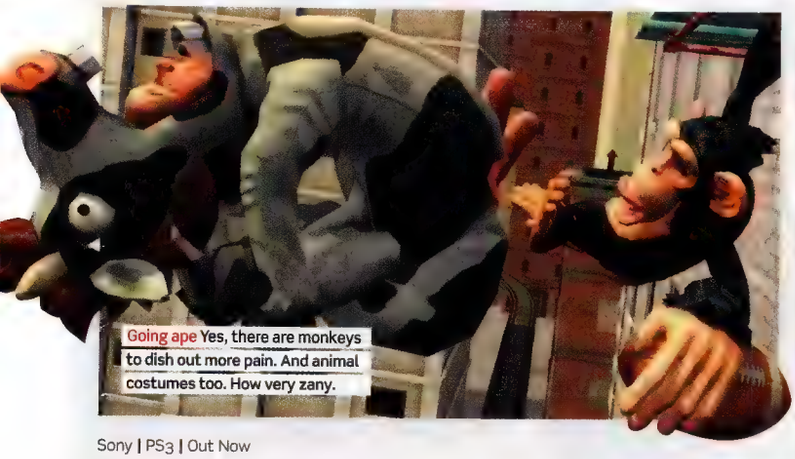


Going ape Yes, there are monkeys to dish out more pain. And animal costumes too. How very zany.

Sony | PS3 | Out Now

Pain

Where there's pleasure, there's pain

Being able to smash stuff up in games is common, but normally it's an aside to the main event. Making an entire game in which you do nothing but knock things over, blow stuff up and revel in smacking a floppy-limbed character groin-first into a pile of scaffolding is a refreshing idea, if a bit limited. You'd feel a bit short-changed if *Burnout* only had Crash mode and zero racing, no matter how much fun you had.

Broken bones

Which is why *Pain* is a perfect download title. Using a giant catapult to launch a man through giant doughnut signs and into everything from explosive tanks of propane to little old ladies might only have short-term appeal, but that doesn't stop it being enjoyable – for a time at least.

You pick up points for nearly everything – stringing together combos by bouncing from one disaster to the next, grabbing pedestrians and lobbing them through windows, breaking bones and striking poses while flying screaming through the air. A couple of other game types are included too, as well as three multi-player games. The downfall is that despite the hidden alleys, doorways and mayhem-creating items its one city gets over-familiar fast. Still, for quick, puerile but gratifying kicks, it hits the target.

Kath Brice

PSM3 Verdict

Pure comedy, if not quite as fun as we'd expected.

75

A site for sore eyes Building sites are prime places for you to hurtle your poor character into.

Konami | PSP | March 1

Metal Gear Portable Ops Plus

That plus should be a minus

Given the excellence of the original, this sort-of sequel should fill us with joy. Instead we're left wondering whether it was really worth it because *Portable Ops Plus* just strips out a lot of what made it so good in the first place and replaces it with stuff we didn't actually want.

You see, there's no story. Instead you get Infinity mode, which offers you randomly-generated missions in levels from the original game, and you're tasked with different objectives each time, like killing every soldier or finishing in a set time. It's called Infinity because it can last forever, but it's not a patch on the original's proper solo game.

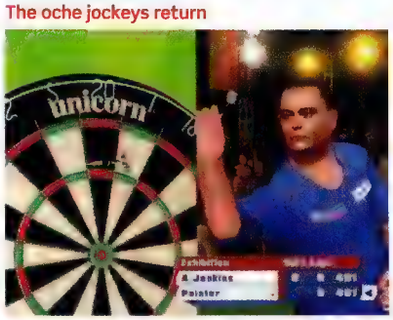
Online is where the unique content is, and you get five multi-player game types as well as new maps and characters. The recruitment idea of the previous game is enhanced and offers over 100 soldiers to trade. There's an intimidating clutter of options, though, and messy controls. Stick to the first game. **Kath Brice**

65

Oxygen | PS2 | Out now

PDC Championship Darts 2008

The oche jockeys return



Like watching the real-life sport, *PDC* might not be something you'd immediately think of spending time with, but a few minutes can soon turn into hours. There's something undeniably hypnotic about darts.

Dart throwing is replicated with the right analogue stick. After setting your target you pull it back to set the speed of the dart and forward to throw it. The straighter you move the stick the more accurate your dart. It's not a bad system, but it's quite tricky to master. However, it's also not really deep enough to sustain long-term appeal. Combating the potential monotony are several play modes including multi-player matches and minigames – which do bulk it out a bit.

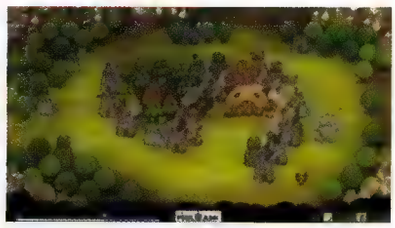
It's all perfectly playable and decent to look at, but it's not the slickest or most appealing of sports games, and it's hardly massively different to last year's outing either. Passable, but not a lot more. **Kath Brice**

60

Sony | PS3 | Out now

PixelJunk Monster

Monstrously moreish



No one wants to see a village full of cute little monsters perish at the hands of a plague of spiders. So killing them is your motivation for replacing all the trees in a forest with cannons, gun towers and anti-aircraft missiles. Admittedly Greenpeace might not approve.

PixelJunk Monsters' hand-drawn 2D visuals gives it a cutesy look, but they hide a deceptively deep real-time strategy game. Just not your typical one, because instead of using a cursor for armament-placing you have direct control of a monster. And instead of paying cold hard cash to upgrade towers, you do a little dance in front of them. Quite.

It's the tightly balanced levels that make it so addictive and, despite its simplicity, the few choices you have are vital. Do you spend the seconds before a new wave of enemies collecting coins before they disappear, or dancing to upgrade towers? Do you spend funds on upgrades or save them for a new type of tower? The 20 levels, co-op play and these tricky dilemmas will have you hooked. **Kath Brice**

80

Sony | PS3 | Out Now

High Velocity Bowling

Motion-sensing bowling scores a strike

Sony can't be faulted for a lack of ingenuity with this game. They've looked at the Sixaxis pad and realised that, by holding it sideways in one hand and spreading your fingers across the shoulder and ⊗ buttons, it can be transformed into a bowling ball. Before you know it, they've made one of the most realistic bowling games available and one that beats *Wii Sports* hands down – well, the quarter of it that's made up of bowling at least – by having masses more depth.

To play you first lock your player's position by tilting the controller left or right, then do the same to set the direction you want to bowl. Your player then begins their approach and you bowl your ball by mimicking the motion with the controller. The harder you swing it forwards, the faster you bowl. Spin is set by holding R1 or R2 with your index or little finger, which is a bit tough on the tendons for little hands but not impossible.

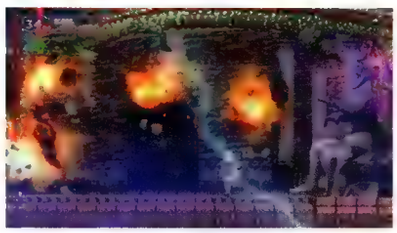
High Velocity looks brilliant for a downloadable game and there's tons to unlock too. The take-turns multi-player for up to four players is where it excels though. **Kath Brice**

72

Konami | PSP | Out now

Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles

Garlic breath and a lot of death



Gothic side-scroller *Castlevania* has been around for years so it's about time it made it to PSP. This isn't a brand new adventure, though. Instead *Dracula X* is a remake of 1993 *Castlevania* title *Rondo Of Blood*. Yes, 'Rondo'. It's the term for a section of music you find in a sonata. Anyway, it's all very old-school.

It's classic *Castlevania*, giving character Richter Belmont limited pick-upable weaponry such as holy water and throwing knives to use alongside his whip. Secondly, it's hard. Harder than talking Dracula into booking a beach holiday. Levels are long, and death at the bony hands of various undead creatures frequently sends you way back to the start.

It's tough, but the ever-evolving levels and grand enemies make it worth the battle, even if the controls aren't spot on. The visuals and sound are great too – but most impressive of all are the two additional games hidden within the main one. Both the original *Rondo Of Blood* and *Symphony Of The Night* are included, which makes this great value. Worth a punt. **Kath Brice**

70

Sony | PS3 | Out now

Sky Diving

Letting rip in the sky

Jumping out of a plane at 5000 feet and having our faces flap about like a bulldog in a wind tunnel isn't an activity we'd ever take up in real life. As a game though, it's OK.

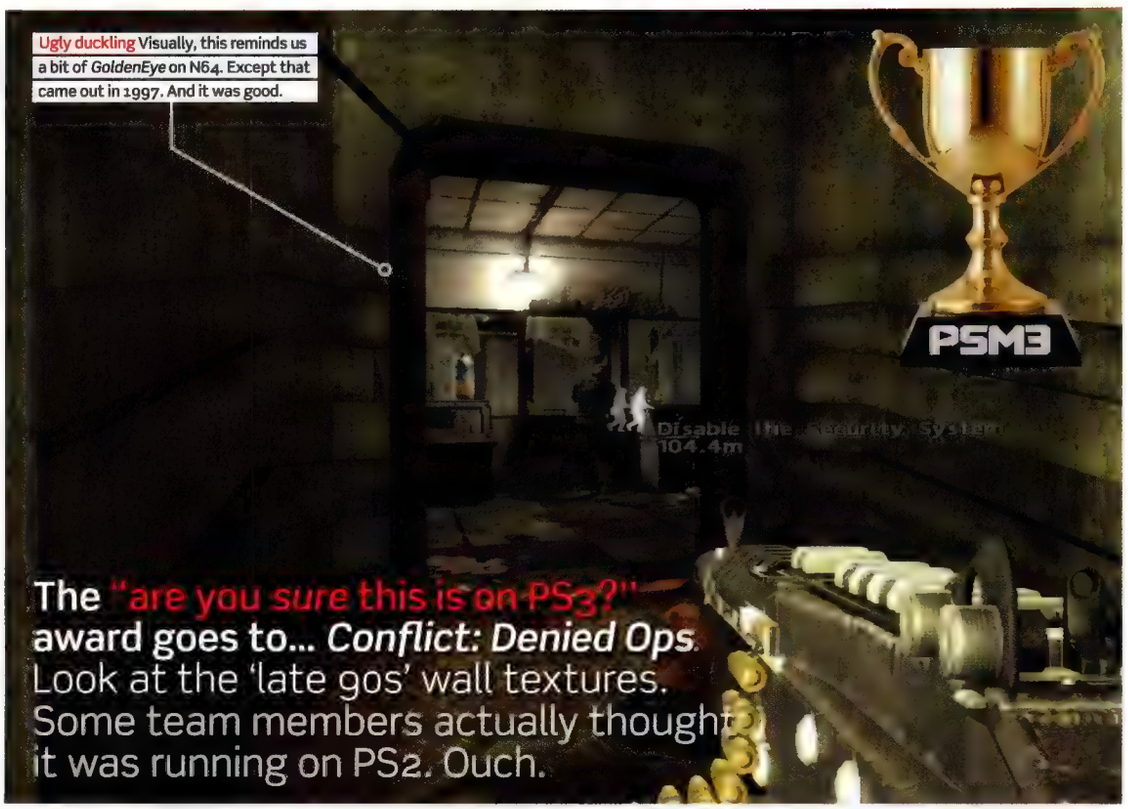
In *Sky Diving*'s Formation mode you tilt and twist the Sixaxis to float your parachutist into one formation after another, with his three teammates alongside him. It's a surprisingly good concept, even if the spinning is a bit hard thanks to the over-sensitive controls. The other problem is that, even though it's fun, the limited formations and lack of competition in single-player means the gameplay is shallow. Landing mode offers a different challenge, however, and it's more simulation-based one – however it's not nearly as addictive as *Monkey Ball*'s Monkey Target.

It's a nice idea and the whole game has gorgeous visuals and an irreverent, likeable feel – from the plinky-plonky music to a big fat man called Captain Rainbow teaching you the basics. But it would have benefited from a better structure and more unlockables. **Kath Brice**

59

PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews

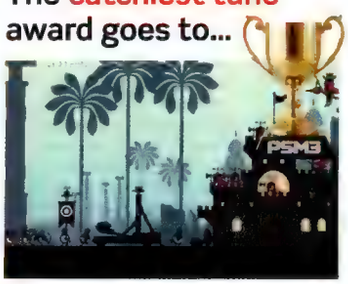

Ugly duckling Visually, this reminds us a bit of GoldenEye on N64. Except that came out in 1997. And it was good.
PSM3
The "are you sure this is on PS3?" award goes to... Conflict: Denied Ops. Look at the 'late gos' wall textures. Some team members actually thought it was running on PS2. Ouch.

The one year too late award goes to...

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

People were quietly impressed with this on Xbox a year or two back. But it's in danger of looking as outdated as a second-hand calendar. Shame.

The catchiest tune award goes to...



Patapon

Pon, pon, pata, pon... that's the tune that will take over your every waking moment, and haunt your dreams too. You might as well embrace insanity now.

Hi-Score Table

☐ Disgaea 3	p76 82%
☐ Patapon	p70 81%
☐ Pro Evo 2008 PSP	p72 81%
☐ Pixel Junk Monsters	p80 80%
☐ Pain	p80 75%
☐ High Velocity Bowling	p80 72%
☐ FIFA Street 3	p68 71%
☐ Castlevania: Dracula X	p81 70%
☐ Lost Planet	p64 69%
☐ MGS Portable Ops Plus	p80 65%
☐ Wild Arms 5	p78 64%
☐ PDC Darts 2008	p80 60%
☐ Sky Diving	p81 59%
☐ Conflict: Denied Ops	p74 50%

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

SpongeBob: Atlantis Squarepants THQ
Not a single one of the SpongeBob games so far has come close to the bizarre magic of the TV show. And we bet this one doesn't either. Ho hum.

Totally Spies! Totally Party! Ubisoft
Based on the cartoon spy show of the same name, this is – *surprise* – a series of minigames. The goal is to "win the most gorgeous ball gown". It won't be as nice as ours.

Iridium Runners SouthPeak
"Set in the year 2050, *Iridium Runners* puts players in pursuit of the Iridium Championship." Yes, you run around some tracks on-foot. Being in the future, though, there's a lot of neon. 'Aces'.

Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

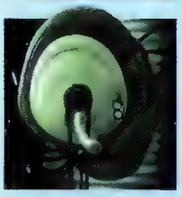
Extended Play

Start

CELEBRATE

82 Brutality reigns in *Mortal Kombat*
A celebration of the most controversial scrapper around.

GENIUS



84 The ten most astonishing segments of *The Orange Box*
Five games, ten unforgettable moments.

EXPLOITS

88 25 hard-to-find treasures in *Uncharted*
Make Drake a very rich man with our guide to finding the treasures.

SECRETS

90 Rocking Satan's cloven hooves off in *Guitar Hero 3*
Thrashing your axe until the devil bows to you.

FACE OFF

92 Russell Brand is castrated in *Smackdown 2008*
Well, not literally, but he gets a good shoeing.

ONLINE

94 A million bullets fly in *Stranglehold*'s online mode
But it's all a bit dull, despite the destruction.

CLASSIC

96 Why *The Thing* is one of the few truly great film licenses
Devs working on movie games, take note.

NATION

98 McDonald's boss blames games for childhood obesity
Games versus fast food – get ready to rumble.

PLAYSTATION CELEBRATION

The bloody history of Mortal Kombat

Fact: by the time an average child grows up he'll have seen 30,000 televised acts of violence: unless he's played *Mortal Kombat*. Then he'll have seen about a million, mimed them in the playground and made a YouTube highlight reel of his favourite ones. Hey, we've been playing it since we were kids and it's never affected us...

MORTAL KOMBAT

The game that made a million children run around playgrounds bellowing "Finish Him!", 1992's *MK* wasn't as superbly balanced or beautifully animated as its contemporaries, but it offered one important difference: you could tear a man's head off and pull out a chunk of his spine. It seems fairly tame now, but at the time this was as revolutionary as putting bongo on mobile phones. Also important: *MK* pioneered the technique of hoovering coins out of pockets in the search for super-rare character Reptile.

Best move: The "Spine him!" is classic, but for timeless simplicity you can't beat Kano's heart rip.
Worst move: Liu Kang's fey little cartwheel/uppercut thing. What, you can't even punch his head off? Wimp.

MORTAL KOMBAT 2

The 1994 sequel built on the air-combo system and added characters, but also gave every fighter two fatalities, a babality and a Friendship move, as well as letting you punch foes into a spiked ceiling or acid pit. Kids continued to wallop each other, now yelling "Get over here!" or "Feel the wrath of Shao Kahn!"
Best move: Kitana's Kiss O' Death is just one of the series' many cheeky nods to Kurt Russell classic Big Trouble In Little China – a quick tongue of the ear and her opponent expands, then pops.
Worst move: Shang Tsung's Kintaro fatality, which took a full 30 seconds to charge up.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Set in the ruins of Earth post-Outworld invasion, *Kombat 3* tossed in more elaborate standing kombos and the Animalities (long-rumoured to be in *MK2*), but never seemed as ground-breaking as its predecessor. It also started the trend of 'funny' moves that weren't really that good.

Best move: Hidden ninja-bot Smoke goes one better than Sektor's chest-bomb by unleashing thousands of them... and blowing up the entire world.
Worst move: Disfigured Outworld warrior Kabal is apparently so horrifying that just taking his mask off scares opponents to death. *Right.*

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

The series finally made the leap to 3D in this 1998 clunker, although the gameplay's still strictly two-dimensional. It introduced some of the series' most forgettable characters, including God Of Wind Fujin, Black Dragon flunky Jarek and Liu Kang's mate Kai. Also the first *Kombat* to feature weapons.
Best move: Tanya continues the kiss o' death tradition for female characters, with a cheeky peck that makes her opponents' limbs spin around and snap off.
Worst move: Everybody else is firing lasers and ripping off arms, but Johnny Cage is still punching heads off. Come on, mate, get with the times.

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

Kicking things off in style with the death of series mainstay Liu Kang, 2002's *Deadly Alliance* follows up with a series of kidney punches in the form of Konquest Mode, multiple fighting styles for each character and a new Test Your Sight minigame.
Best move: Kano does a classic take on his old fatality by ripping out his opponent's heart, lungs and liver.
Worst move: Bo Rai Cho pukes on the ground and his opponent skids about in the mess. The sound effects are worse than anything else.

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS

Technically a free-roaming beat-'em-up – with treasure chests and everything – *Monks* sees Liu Kang and Kung Lao getting in hilarious scrapes as they battle through Outworld. Not bad, just...well, not fun...

Best move: Finding Shao Kahn's hammer and beating a lengthy series of Tartakan warriors into paste.

Worst move: The bit where you're *forced* to knock enemies onto spiked catapults in order to continue. You WHAT?

MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

Boon and co went for broke in *Kombat*'s final PS2 instalment in 2006, including every character from the series, newcomers Daegon and Taven, an excellent create-a-character mode... and kart racing minigame, *Motor Kombat*. All right, so the last one was rubbish.

Best move: The create-a-fatality menu means it's possible to do death moves with up to 11 stages, ideally leaving your opponent limbless and exploded.

Worst move: Almost anything from ping-pong ball man Mokap, making an unwelcome return for the first time in two games.

MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

New character Shujinko makes his debut in the improved, story-driven Konquest mode... and immediately messes things up by giving the Dragon King the trinket he needs to destroy the world. 2004's *Deception* was also notable for introducing Kobra, a self-defence instructor gone rogue who starts killing people. Genius.

Best move: *Deception* was notable for introducing Hara-Kiri death moves – and watching Kobra rip out his own heart is the only thing we've ever seen that makes Jean Claude Van Damme films look scientifically plausible.

Worst move: Stupidest Hara-Kiri? That would be Shujinko lobbing his swords into the air, then lopping his own arms off as they fall down. It almost looks like a mistake, which isn't really what you're after.

ON THE DISC
Like FPS's? Check our reviews of Turok and Unreal 2

10 Reasons why we adore The Orange Box

Andy Kelly

PLAYSTATION GENIUS

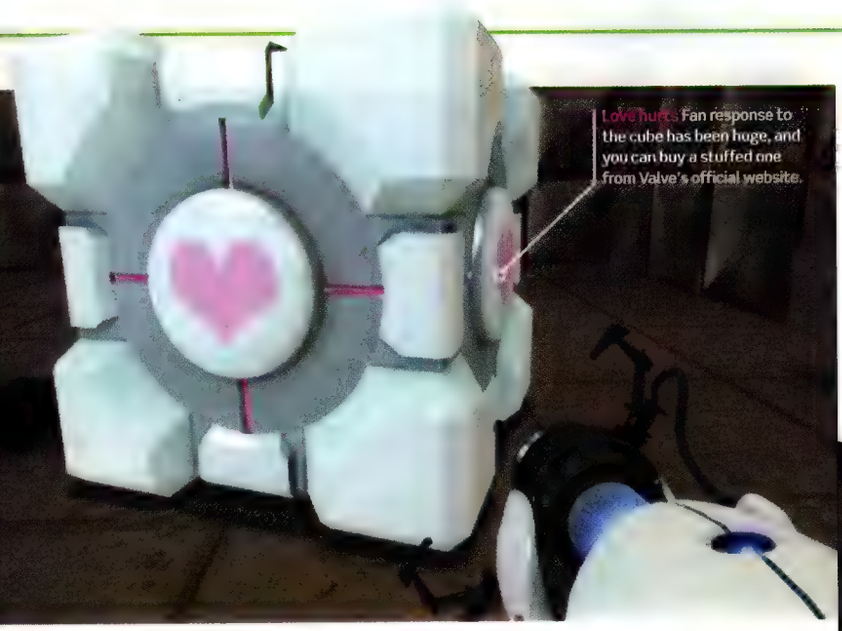
Alyx loves her dad, which Valve's incredible animation expresses beautifully

Dog gone Alyx's playful relationship with her robotic pal Dog shows her vulnerable, human side

1 WE FELL IN LOVE WITH ALYX

We care more about this mass of pixels and polygons than we ever did about some of our ex-girlfriends. And that's definitely not an exaggeration for comic effect. She's fictional, but there's something about Alyx Vance that makes her seem *real*. Maybe it's Mark Laidlaw's script, or Merle Dandridge's convincing voice acting, or maybe it's because you share such an epic journey with her – from the resistance in City 17 to the last stand at White Forest. And when she winks at Gordon we go weak at the knees.

Pub EA
Dev Valve
FYI PS3 | 2001 | PSM3 60%
A mega-value package containing *Half-Life 2*, *HL2 Episode One*, *HL2: Episode Two*, insane puzzler *Portal* and online shooter *Team Fortress 2*



2 AND WE FELL FOR A CUBE TOO

It takes a special game to make you feel *genuine sadness* for a grey box. In *Portal*'s 17th test chamber you're asked to carry a 'weighted companion cube' through the level. So not only do you have to contend with *Portal*'s multi-dimensional puzzles, but you have to do it ferrying a cube about. But, at the end, the only way to proceed is to 'euthanise' your beloved cube by tossing it into a furnace. Sob.

High-fatal Don't let the Antlions get near the Vortigaunt and Alyx.
Sixth sense One light means a few Antlions, three means loads.

4 THE ANTLION ONSLAUGHT

As a Vortigaunt uses his mystical 'vortessence' to heal Alyx, Gordon must cover four passages with re-appropriated Combine turrets to stop an incoming hive of angry Antlions. There are sensors hooked up to each tunnel, and if the light goes red then a swarm's on its way. By the end of this sequence the turrets have broken down and the Antlions rampage from all four entrances at once. It's *hellish*.

3 IT'S FUN AND EDUCATIONAL

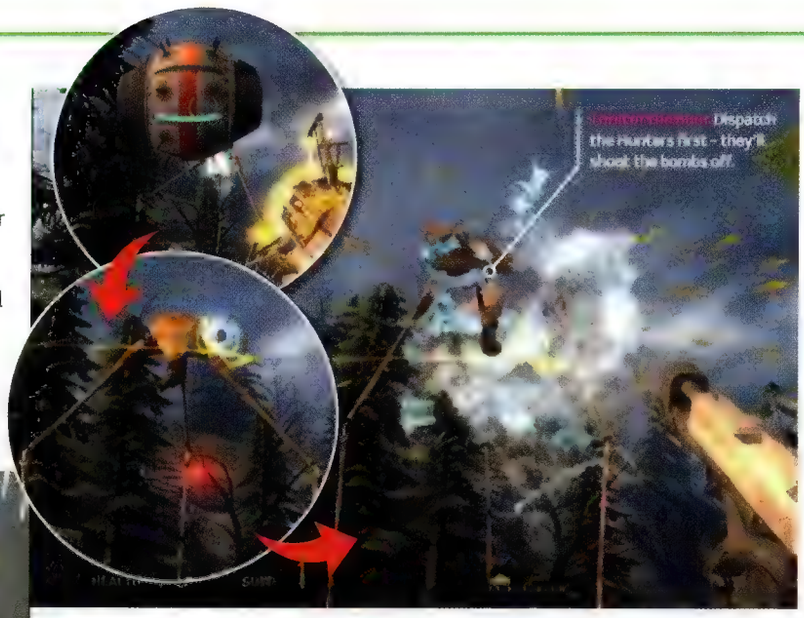
Once you've finished *E1* and *E2*, you can play through them again with developer commentaries activated. This is genius – in each scene there are spinning nodes that, when activated, play an audio file of one of the designers explaining how it was designed. It's genuinely interesting, and they really make you aware of how much love and attention has gone into each of *Half-Life*'s incredible set-pieces.

5 LEADING THE RESISTANCE

After destroying Nova Prospekt, Gordon heads back to City 17 and finds armies of freedom fighters revolting against the Overwatch. If they see you they'll join forces with you, yelling "Follow Freeman!" They all have their own distinct personalities and will fight with you to the death.

6 GLADOS GOES MENTAL

The Genetic Lifeform and Disk Operating System (or GLaDOS) is your instructor in *Portal*. As you play through the game you realise that her software is corrupt, a suspicion confirmed when she tries to kill you. You survive, and are forced to destroy the machine. But, sinisterly, as the credits roll we hear GlaDOS singing – the insanely catchy Still Alive, written by singer/songwriter Jonathan Coulton – suggesting that she wasn't destroyed after all.

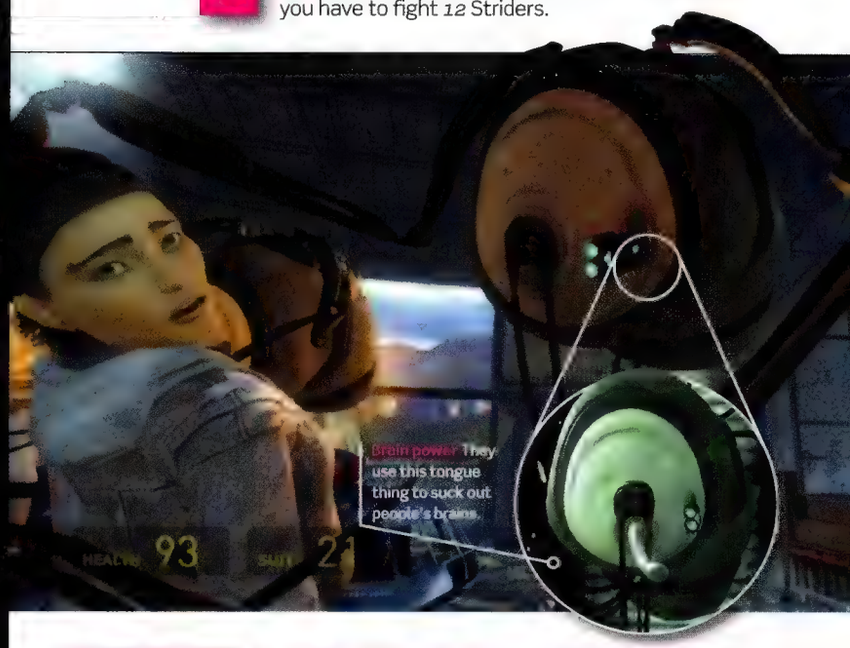


7 THE STRIDER BUSTER BOMBS

Blustery scientist Arne Magnusson - a new character introduced in *E2* – develops this bomb, called The Magnusson Device, to destroy Striders. You pick the device up with the gravity gun, fire it at a Strider, causing it to stick to their body. Then all it takes is one shot from the pistol to blow it to pieces. This comes in useful during the climactic scene where you have to fight *12* Striders.

8 THE SUPER GRAVITY GUN

When Gordon infiltrates the Citadel an energy field confiscates his weapons, but rather than vapourise the gravity gun it zaps it with energy and makes it a hundred times stronger. Now you can use the device to pick Combine troops up and fling them through the air, and rip the Citadel to pieces. You only get to use the souped-up mega-weapon briefly, which is clever of Valve because it makes the experience all the more special. When the gun is returned to Gordon at the beginning of *E1*, it loses all of its power for good.



9 THE COMBINE ADVISORS

The Combine have been invading planets for years, stealing technology, enslaving the natives and absorbing natural resources. They're completely dependent on slave labour and machines and have become fat and slug-like as a result. You glimpse the Advisors – their true form – briefly in *HL2* and *E1*, but it's not until you come face to face with one in *E2* that you realise how scary they really are.

"Gordon hasn't said a single word in any of the *Half-Life* games."

10

JUST WHO IS THE G-MAN?

It's not clear why, but at the end of the first *Half-Life* the G-Man put Gordon into stasis, 'unfreezing' him decades later after the Combine had taken over Earth in *HL2*. He seems to be using Gordon – against his will – as a kind of mercenary, and regularly mentions that you're working for "the highest bidder". His purpose is unclear, but whatever his end, he needs Alyx and Gordon alive to achieve it. His bizarre speech patterns, powerful control over space and time and ghostly pallor suggest he's not quite human. He's the series' biggest mystery.

Spy hard The G-Man follows Freeman's progress throughout the entire game.

Hide and seek Catch a glimpse of him and he'll wander off, disappearing completely.

Meeting of minds He's often seen chatting to other characters.

Case and point It's never revealed what's inside his ever-present briefcase.

The ones we didn't pick...

Bridge out
To get to White Forest, Gordon needs to 'borrow' a car. Problem is, it's trapped in the middle of a bridge that's been blasted with a surge of energy from a portal storm. As he makes his way across, the structure buckles and bends, before collapsing completely. It's a familiar *Half-Life* physics puzzle, but on a huge scale.

Entering the Citadel
Your first journey through City 17's vast Citadel is terrifying. You see armies of Striders, Dropships and Combine soldiers being readied for war and Stalkers – mutated human slaves – wandering around.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

ON THE DISC
We've featured *Uncharted* plenty on past discs

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

The most obscure treasures in Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Justin Towell

EMAIL PSM3
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM36 89%
The words 'playable movie' are usually a sure sign of a videogame's crapness, but in *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*'s case it's a pretty accurate description. It's Indiana Jones with *Tomb Raider Anniversary*'s best bits thrown in – and it looks a million dollars too. If you haven't got it, buy it yesterday.

GETTING RICH 25 of the trickier treasures to locate

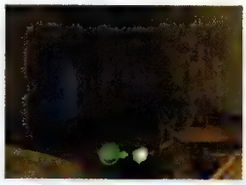
Found all the treasures in *Uncharted* yet? They're easy to miss, so here are the hardest of the bunch and how to get 'em – in the order they appear. If you get stuck, look for a flashing light signalling a treasure's location. Ready to get rich?

Find... Golden toothpick
After you've seen the cut-scene inside the smashed-up plane and cleared the area of pirate scum, head through the gate and turn right. Easy starter – but easily missed, too.

Find... Silver bird vessel
After negotiating the exploded jeep and precarious rockface section, don't turn left and take on the pirates. There's a treasure to your right, where the trees meet the cliff edge.

Find... Silver Inca earring
As the pirates swing down the rocks in the area with the man traps (Chapter 4) you'll see a glint at the top. Blow them away, pick your way over there, then go up round the back.

Find... Silver jaguar
After the courtyard battle in early Chapter 5 (and nabbing the Strange Relic – see opposite page), you'll find this heap of crap. But inside that lookout tower over there is the treasure.



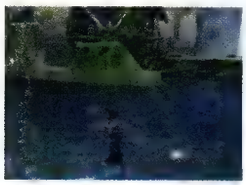
Find... Golden spoon
In the tunnel with the machine gunner at the end, make your way forward and over to the right. You'll find a gun to kill him (yay) a pirate (boo) and treasure (yay). Kill the pirate and the spoon is yours.

Find... Spanish silver coin
Once you've got the keys from the tower, there's a big gunfight. When it's over, you'll see the treasure glinting to the left of the gate. You saw it, right? Good, so go and pick it up.

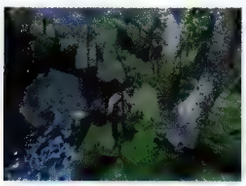
Find... The decorated silver ring
Right at the start of Chapter 8, after shooting the pirates on the cliff, you have another gunfight immediately. All you have to do is look right before moving on.

Find... The jewelled golden brooch
As soon as you reach the start of Chapter Ten, head downstairs, not forwards. The treasure is tucked away in the corner (the glint of light in the screenshot here).

Find... Spanish gold coin
After you miss the boat, you get to these two staircases. The game leads you left, but take the right-hand one instead. The treasure is just past the doorway, over to the right.



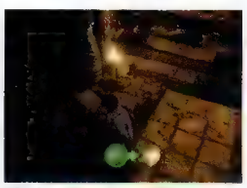
Find... Golden turtle
As Chapter 13 begins, jump into the water and swim round the waterwheel. The treasure is on a ledge – see the glint on the screenshot above. Wheely easy. Tips *and* humour. We're spoiling you.



Find... Silver Inca cup
After the rather grisly cut-scene with a trap made of your own airplane parts, go look under the steps. The treasure's just sitting there underneath them. You'll get wet socks though.

Find... Gold Spanish chalice
Head left immediately as you enter this area near the end of Chapter 13. It's in the far corner. Collect it while being chased like we did for added 'cool factor'.

Find... Golden Inca vessel
Right at the start of Chapter 14 you'll be looking ahead for scary things. Turn right instead – the ledge next to the steps you just came down holds this treasure, so go and collect it.



Find... Silver snuff box
After you've got the golden skull (see right), open the gate and head up the steps. You'll see pirates loitering there, but don't shoot yet – walk left and nab the loot.

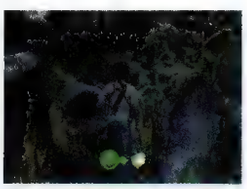
Find... The silver Spanish goblet
After climbing down the ladder (with Drake wondering how they'd get the statue out of here), you get shot at. But look behind this sarcophagus on the left...

Find... Silver ingot
After the story sequence where a cigarette lands on Drake's head (poor chap), you have to jump across here. The Silver ingot lies behind those stairs. Remember the jump, though.

Find... The gold and ruby Inca masks
This one's right by the winch after the Silver ingot. It's easy enough to find, but we've included it because... well, it looks a bit surprised to have been found.

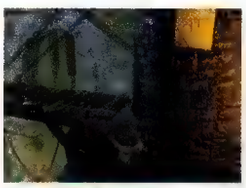
Find... Gold Inca figurine
This one's well hidden by the long grass right at the start of Chapter 15. It's in the corner to the right of the staircase, so have a dig around. Another reason not to rush forwards.

Find... The golden Spanish goblet
After Sully calls you telling you to get to the top of the church, you'll need to climb up to get here. Beat the two guards then turn right.



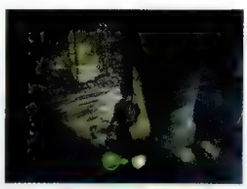
Find... Golden Inca mask
Not hard to get, just hard to find. When you're in the graveyard after the sniping bit, look to the right of the building with the vault ajoining it. The treasure is hidden next to that.

Find... Silver cup and cover
In the treasure vault, take this (pictured) right-hand path at the start. Just go straight until you hit a wall, then turn right. Repeat this until you're at the treasure. Ker-ching.



Find... The jewelled silver brooch
Start the waterwheel in the treasure vault, go back down the stairs and climb the chain. When you reach the second swinging lamp, look left. Go to the ledge.

Find... The golden Seadragon pendant
This little beauty is near the end of the game. After shooting loads of mutants and guards, you should have time to climb the big boxes by the wall. Jump across.



Find... The sapphire and silver mask
In the last room before the cut-scene of the statue being opened, look behind the pillar for the sapphire and silver mask. If the cut-scene plays, you've gone too far.

Find... Treasure 61? Eh?
There are actually 61 treasures – the Strange Artifact (see right) isn't one of the 60 the game says you can get. We haven't found a 62nd, but who knows? An Ottsel Skull, maybe? A Golden Bandicoot?

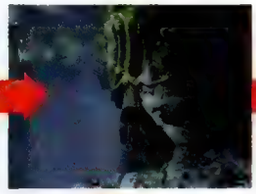
Uncharted FAQ

Q How do I do all the gunfights? I keep getting myself killed.
A Always use [illegible] you can stay [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

TRICKIEST TREASURE #1 The golden skull

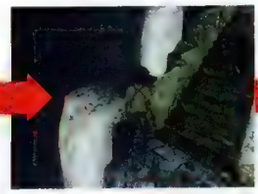
Step 1... Stop
There's another treasure near the start of Chapter 14. You'll soon come to a cavern with shafts of light coming from above and waterfalls... this one above, in fact.

Step 2... Look
Look to your left and you'll see the familiar glint of treasure coming from behind the waterfall itself. But how are you going to jump all the way over there?



Step 3... Listen
Actually, you don't have to. Just make the impossible-looking leap to the right and make your way along the ledges. Drake's clearly been playing a lot of *Tomb Raider*.

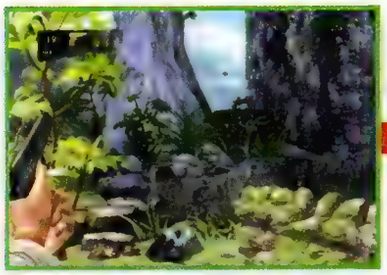
Step 4... Think
There are a couple of crumbling ledges in succession, do don't dawdle. Just keep steadily working left. It's slow, but have some patience.



Step 5... Jump to it
Now it's a simple case of walking between the steps and the pit of certain death into the waterfall to claim your prize. Erm, no need to jump like we did.

Step 6... Mulder? No
It's a golden skull. Sadly its jaw's missing so it can't chatter at you. Let's be honest – it would be brilliant if it said 'Yarrr! Ye found me.' A missed opportunity.

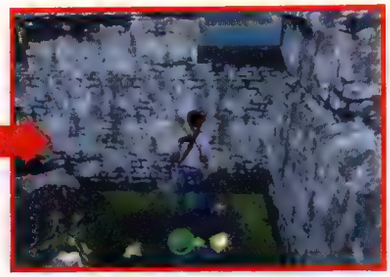
TRICKIEST TREASURE #2 The gold llama



Predictable In this wide open area of Chapter 6, you'd expect there to be some treasure around. First thing's first though – open a can of whup-ass on these pirate-shaped fellas.

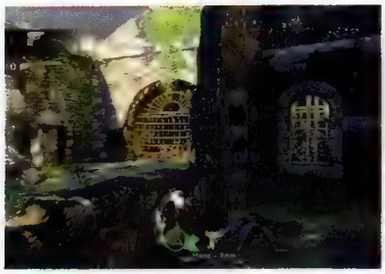
Have a Barney Head across the courtyard and look for the pile of rubble. It seems too dense to house a treasure – probably because it is. But take a little look around...

Plain sight Yup, there's a platform, clear as day. And another one, just an easy leap away. Suddenly it all seems obvious and the treasure may as well be in your pocket already.



Llama-rama Walk between the trees and over the debris on the floor – the treasure is lying on the ground waiting for you to pick it up. Sweet.

TRICKIEST TREASURE #3 A nod to the Ottsel



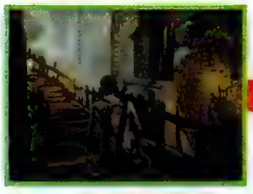
Cover story Once you get into the courtyard in early Chapter 5, there will be loads of pirates to kill. Take your time, use the cover and watch where the shots are coming from – especially above.

Going up Now make your way up the stairs. Try to get to the pillar at the top and use that for cover while you pick off the last couple of enemies.

Glitchy bit Now the tricky part. There's a small section missing from the lip of the edge here. Run, jump and try not to let Drake's auto-grab turn you round.

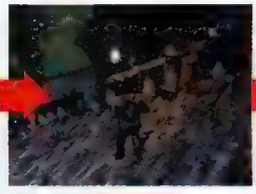
Familiar shape And there it is. It's actually not so 'strange' once you look at it – it's a Precursor Orb from Naughty Dog's *Jak & Daxter* games. Woot? Yes. Absolutely.

TRICKIEST TREASURE #4 The gold snuffbox

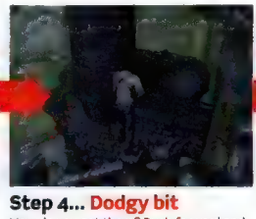


Step 1... Look familiar?
After getting past the big gate (there's a chain to climb once you're the other side), you'll have several gunfights. You're close when you see this restart point.

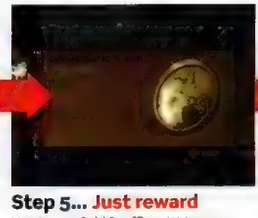
Step 2... Dead wood
Climb the spiral walkway and cross more wooden platforms. You'll come up to this stone area with another pirate to kill. Make your gun do that bang thing again.



Step 3... Eyes right
Take his weapon if you need it, then turn to the right towards the steps. Before you go any further, look over the right-hand side to see a familiar glint.



Step 4... Dodgy bit
How do you get there? Push forward and ⊗ and Drake awkwardly vaults onto the side and stands there. Now just jump forwards and hope he makes it. He will.



Step 5... Just reward
Here's your Gold Snuffbox. We're sure these artifacts are priceless and will fetch a penny on Drake's return but seriously – how big are his pockets?

Step 6... Fall guy
Now to get back. We tried jumping to the next brick platform but this happened. A snuff box indeed. Still, we respawned with the treasure in our grasp.

LAST BOSS Want to know how to beat Navarro?

Step 1... Keep your guard
It's do or die time. Ignore the boss for now and concentrate your fire on the guards. Just keep your head down when Navarro (with the laser sight) starts shooting.

Step 2... Roll with it
Soon, you'll end up here with no gun. Navarro will fire twice then pause. That's your cue to roll – with ⊙ – to the right before his third shot destroys your cover.

Step 3... Crate expectations
This one's harder. Do the same – just try to time it so Navarro's shot hits the crate you're leaving and not you.

Step 4... Jump to it
If it goes according to plan, you'll make it to those last crates unscathed. Now just wait for two more shots before leaping out and smacking him with ⊡.

Step 5... QTE time
There is a QTE sequence to beat, but it's not too hard. However, when you see this cut-scene, hold the left stick towards Navarro – you have to get moving fast...

Step 6... Gun and dusted
...so that you can punch him again before he picks up his gun. One final QTE sequence is all that stands between you and the end credits.

ON THE DISC
Check out our review of
Guitar Hero 3 | 1 metre

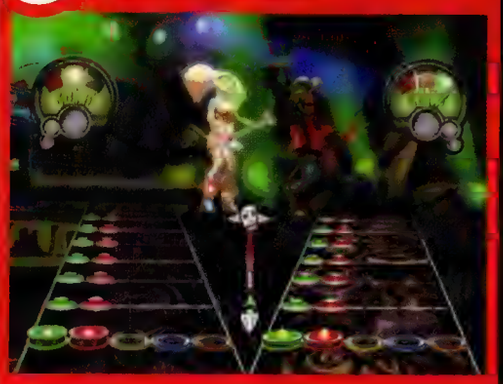
PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Beating the Devil in Guitar Hero 3

Duel entry
You've already battled through some bewildering effects pedal nonsense from Tom Morello and three minutes of fretboard wankery from Slash, but *Guitar Hero 3* throws in some real music for the final duel. The story is that you've been tricked into signing a contract with Satan himself. The song is the Charlie Daniels Band classic The Devil went Down To Georgia, as covered by hard rock monster Steve Ouimette. It's a classic tale of a young man offered a duel with the Devil, who's tooting gold fiddles, with an all American twist – the Devil loses. It's also one of the trickiest songs in the game, although if you've suffered through *GH2*'s Jordan it feels like tinkling a Fisher Price piano.

"You've been tricked into signing up with Satan himself"

1 Devil music



Skip to my Lou The Devil's tough – he gets just as many sections as you, and he'll pound you mercilessly with broken strings and whammy bar bits. All you can do in the early stages is hit back and try to distract him enough to survive

2 Johnny's solo

Fret your life Last it out here and you'll have enough power-ups to hit back. Time it right and old Lou starts to scuff his fingering, and soon he's on the ropes. The solo's huge, but if you manage to knock him into the red before it's over, it's time to finish him off...

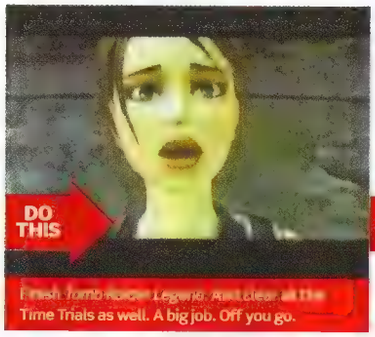
3 Hero worship

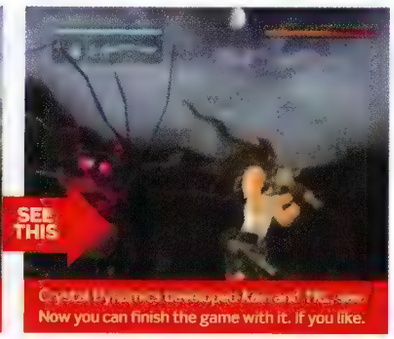
Strum all ye faithful "I told you once, you son of a bitch, I'm the best there's ever been!" barks out the chorus, and it's time for a victory solo to pound the demon into submission. You're officially a rock legend – but can you do it on Expert? Short answer: no.

PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

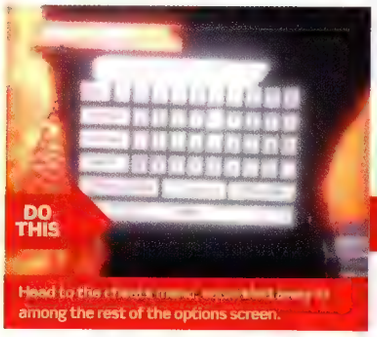
Hidden area › **Test Drive Unlimited** › Explore the secret island

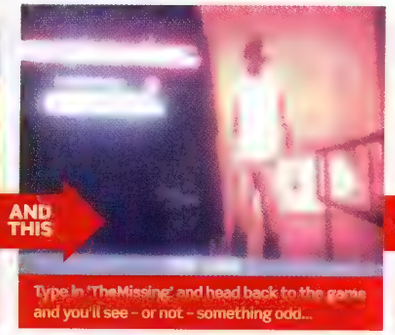
Secret weapon › **Tomb Raider Legend** › The Soul Reaver





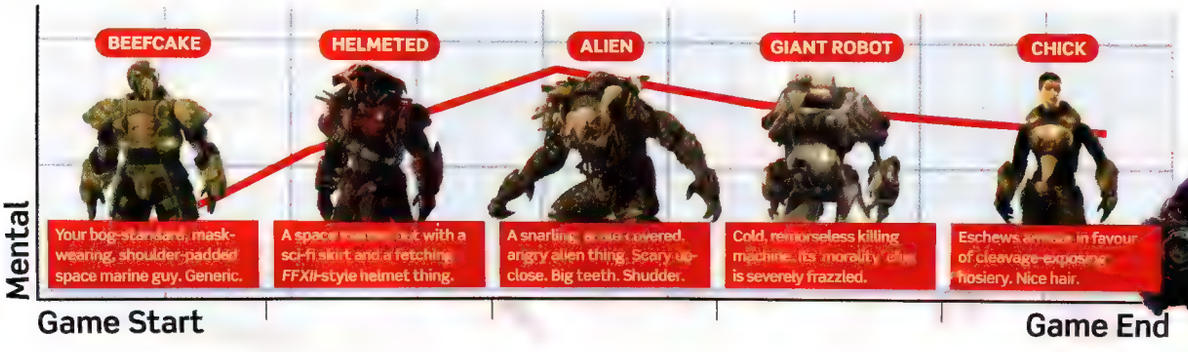
Daft cheat › **Tony Hawk's Proving Ground** › Invisible skater





Zero to hero in... Unreal Tournament 3

All manner of burly space marines, and a not-so-burly space marin-ette


BEEFCAKE
HELMETED
ALIEN
GIANT ROBOT
CHICK
Your bog-standard, mask-wearing, shoulder-padded space marine guy. Generic.
A space marine but with a sci-fi skirt and a retching FFXII-style helmet thing.
A snarling, scale-covered, angry alien thing. Scary up-close. Big teeth. Shudder.
Cold, remorseless killing machine. Its 'morality' chip is severely frazzled.
Eschews armour in favour of cleavage-exposing hosiery. Nice hair.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5 Cheats you *must* know

1 Half-Life 2
Level select
While playing the game, press ←(4), L1, →(4) and R1 to unlock all levels

2 Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron
Invincibility
At the Profile Load screen, press ↑, ↓, ↑, △, ○, ←, →, ↓. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear the sound of lightsabers clashing.

3 Cars Mater-National
All cars
Enter 'MATTEL07' at the cheat codes menu to unlock all cars.

4 Soldier Of Fortune: Payback
ACR-2 sniper rifle
At the main menu, select Single Player and Start New Game, then press ↑(2), ↓, ←, →(2), ↓ at the difficulty selection menu.

5 Unreal Tournament 3
Play as Alanna (Necris)
At the custom character screen, press △, then enter 'phayder' as a code to unlock Alanna (Necris).

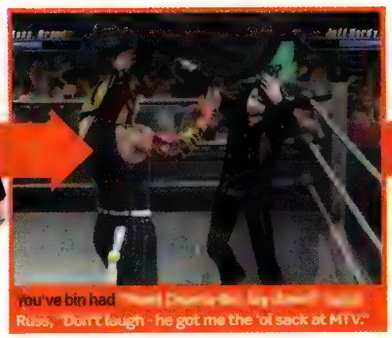
ON THE DISC
Like wrestling? Check out

PLAYSTATION FACE-OFF

Russell Brand gets a proper beating in Smackdown

David Cook

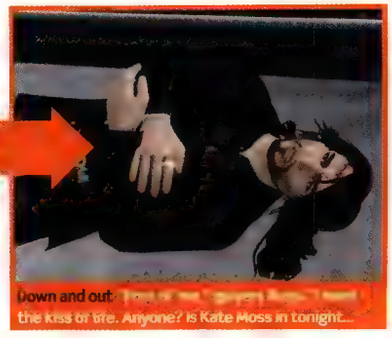
Knee problem "Is anything else you can't do?" says Russell. "Almost as 'andsome as me!" Bang!


You've bin had "Good Chancellor, by David" said Russ. "Don't laugh - he got me the 'ol sack at MTV."

Load of rubbish "Hi Matt, That Travis Fimmel only won for one great haircut in this ring," crows Jeff.

Sit down [illegible] the crowd. Jeff takes advantage – and a seat.

Stick up [illegible] stuck I get at me stand up gigs", cries Russel.


Down and out [illegible] the kiss of life. Anyone? Is Kate Moss in tonight...

USE WWE SMACKDOWN 2008

Go to F.A.C.E. mode

Editing Tip Give Brand the most flamboyant entrance animations you can.

MAKE RUSSELL

"Good luck making the 'ol scarf"

Body and face menus

Hair	73/73
Head	7, 48, 30
Forehead size	7, 11, 86, 0
Eye type	7/9
Eyebrows	13/38
Skin tone	12/12
Ageing	30
Goatee	12/14
Facial hair template	13/26
Face paint	100/116
Morphing menu	
Eyebrows	-58, 100, 0, -25
Eyes	4, 74, 21, -63, 5, 100, -10
Nose	0, 54, -22, 7, -59, -7, 52, -23
Jaw	51, -28, 10, -18, 55, 40
Neck	-45, -10, 0
Chest	8, -15, -24
Shoulders	-78, -30, -5
Waist	19, -6
Clothes	
Tops	32/40
Bottoms	24/42
Jackets	1/21
Belt	14/30
Biography	
Fighting style	Showman
Crowd signs	Get A Haircut

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Thanks to Dragor77, winner of the www.caw.ws create-a-wrestler contest, for this ace Brand.

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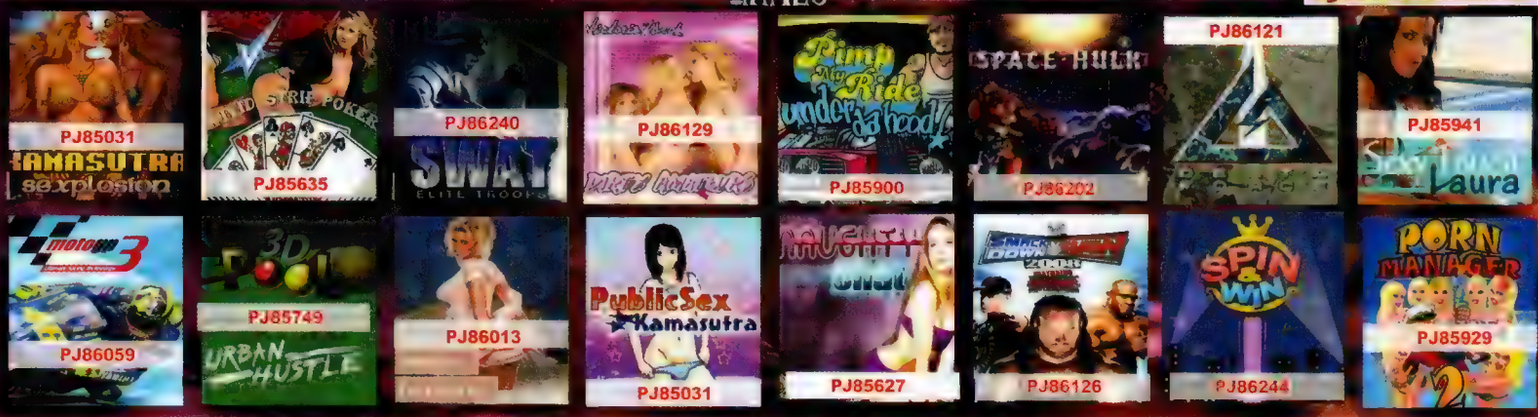
Hot Club action PX78453	Dorm room HV PX78429	Passionate babe 2 RUDE 2 SHOW PX78407
Housemates 2 RUDE 2 SHOW PX78439	Bathroom babes PX78401	Common Room passion 2 RUDE 2 SHOW PX78396

NAUGHTY VIDS

PX75984 Paris Home Vid	PX75993 Tera Patrick	PX79103 Naked On Bed	PX75976 Angelina Jolie XXX	PX76171 Car Park action	PX79081 NAKED IN KITCHEN		PX78949	PX76263 Jenna Haze	PX78560	PX76315 Imogen
PX76256 Sylvia Saint	PX75427 Girl Love XXX	PX76521 Urban Angel	PX75981 Carmen Electra	PX76219 Paris Vid 2			PX76345 Alaura Eden	PX75962 Bad Nurse	PX78370 Perfect lez	PX76156 Leilani in pool
PX75918 Great Rack	PX75786 Mature with experience	PX75632 Fondling Friends	PX75091 1st timer	PX76421 Climax	PX76304 Dirty Girl	PX76348 Hannah Harper	PX75566 Bad girls	PX76228 Devilishly hot	PX78947 Hot Sex	PX77813 Michelle Marsh red hot
PX75333 Solo girl	PX75626 2 girls	PX75746 Bed time	PX76367 Jenna Jameson	PX76314 Kinky fun	PX76418 Tight package	PX76406 Naughty!!	PX76283 Hot action	PX77555 Lacey Stacey		
PX78941 Sucked	PX75407 Home alone	PX76824 Poolside romp	PX76509 Shower action	PX75866 Extra handful	PX76365 Sexy beast	PX78378 Office lez	PX78357 Bath lez	PX78039 Emily Scott vid		

STAR GAME

GAMES



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ON THE DISC
Multi-Midway shooty action in Level 3

Shoot yourself senseless in Stranglehold online

Joel Snape

Pub Midway
Dev Midway
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM3 78%
John Woo and Chow Yun Fat team up for a sort of sequel to Hard Boiled with more slow-motion diving than a Martin Keown highlight reel. The destructibility of the environments and the constant, percussive shooting make for an experience that rarely lets up

There's a bit in John Woo's seminal A Better Tomorrow 2 where Chow Yun Fat senses the lead bad guy sneaking up on him and spins around just in time for them to both shoot each other's ribcages full of hollow points. Obviously, Chow survives.

Somebody at Midway must have thought that scene was brilliant, because here's how many bullets you can take in *Stranglehold*'s online mode before you actually die: *all of them*. Seriously, we've fired entire clips into enemies and had to run around looking for a reload. This makes mano-a-mano gun battles less about skill and more about attrition: the winner's usually the one who finds a health pack or power-up-giving paper-crane mid-fight. If there aren't any bonuses to be had, you'll both simply dive at each other and then flop around on the floor like dying herrings until one of you gets up and runs off.

Balls to it

The biggest problem with *Stranglehold*, though, is that it was so clearly designed for solo play. Its best feature, for instance, is the power-up that lets you shoot men's groins in super-close up and excruciating slow-mo, watered down so much for multi-player that it's virtually useless. Similarly, the bullet-time that makes aiming so simple in single-player's doled out in tiny, sporadic patches, which is more confusing than helpful. Worst of all, the barrage power-up's now game-breakingly powerful - it makes you invincible and lets you fire at double speed, without giving your opponents any hint of what they're up against. This reduces every match to a desperate race for the paper cranes - we've won games by running away until finding them. And, of course, the point-blank Mexican standoffs are gone completely.

Watching old mano-a-mano bits from John Woo films in the wake of *Stranglehold*'s single-player game gave us high hopes for what the multi-player might be like. And now we're just left pondering what might have been.

ONLINE VERDICT

Lots of players? No Trying to get a game is like sitting in Hell's own version of Didcot Parkway's waiting room.
Buy it just for online? Really don't

GAMEPLAY Defining moment

Stranglehold's endlessly breakable environments are usually reduced to splinters within seconds of starting a game. But you can't deny that they look pretty.

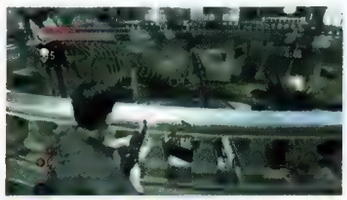
Banisters, trolleys and worktops are all highlighted to show that they're interactive, although trotting along a narrow ledge in multi-player is almost always fatal.

With only one memorable character in the game – that's Fat – other players get to fight it out between the likes of 'man in balaclava' and 'Generic Thug 2'. Hardly the world's most inspiring set of baddies.

Although you can squeeze the trigger on the twin pistols until your finger's sore with no results, a single blast from the shotgun can take you down. Priority one: get a better gun.

LEVELS Nowhere To Hide

Stranglehold's levels are minor rejigs of areas that already exist in the game. There are some nice touches - like ducking under laser wires to get the kills-anything-in-one-shot golden gun, but they're generally a bit too densely packed with health and power-ups. The idea is clearly to make things frenetic, but the result is messy carnage.



1 Laser tag
It's a bizarre inclusion in the main game, but in multi-player the penthouse level is sheer insanity. To summarise: it's full of lasers, and brushing against a single one of them means instant death and a minus one penalty to your score for a 'suicide'. That's right: a game that actively encourages you to jump around suddenly decides to punish you for it by exploding your legs to bits. Oh, the humanity. Don't play this level if you've got a short fuse.

2 More tea, Vicar?
The teahouse – obviously based on the opening shootout from Woo's The Killer – is where we did most of our rank-leapfrogging. If you scamper around swinging from chandeliers, simultaneously blasting those beneath you, it's a mere few seconds' work to collect enough origami birds, which allow you to unleash a devastating barrage attack. Amazingly, loads of new players couldn't figure it out, even though we did it for the entire course of a fifteen-minute game.

3 Let's talk about Rex
The museum is by far the best environment for destruction, with dodos, glass cases and skeletons ripe for annihilation at every turn. Its paper cranes are in slightly risky spots – you'll have to dance along the museum's central light fitting or up a T-Rex skeleton to get them – but bagging them ensures a potentially match-winning spin attack. And if all else fails, simply harvest the corridors for health. Players who know the level, as ever, are the most likely victors.

TIPS Three steps to *Stranglehold* dominance

Get a better gun. The golden guns are so much more powerful than your standard Berettas it's like taking a firehose to a water-pistol fight.

Use the precision shot when you can. It's essentially useless unless your opponent stops moving, but does enormous damage.

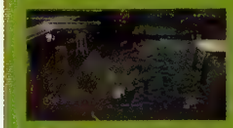
Get the paper cranes. Being able to top up your health mid-duel is helpful, but triggering a Barrage attack makes you all but invincible.

Online Highlights

1

2

3



4

5

Harshest insult

"You really can't do this, can you?"

Community service

Leaderboard

JimAI's top of the charts with a whopping 1,459 minutes of playtime and a kill/death ratio of about 3:1, but *Stranglehold*'s so easy to exploit that you can hurdle through the lower ranks easily. We went from 600 to 158 in less than an hour of play.

ON THE DISC
If a sequel ever comes into being we'll get it on the disc.

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Why The Thing is one of the best movie games ever

Andy Kelly

Pub Vivendi
Dev Creative Artworks
FYI PS2 | 2002 | PSM27 83%
A game sequel to the classic 80s sci-fi horror flick and a unique take on squad-shooting

In 1982 John Carpenter made The Thing, a sci-fi horror movie about an Antarctic research base overrun by a shapeshifting alien. It's one of the most claustrophobic, terrifying films ever made and stars Kurt Russell as memorably sardonic badass J.R. MacReady. At the end of the film MacReady and fellow survivor Childs are forced to destroy the base to kill the alien, and are left stranded in a snowstorm with no means of reaching or contacting the outside world. And that's it; the credits roll and the pair's fate is left ambiguous.

That is, until the sequel was released 20 years later in 2002. Although, interestingly, it wasn't a movie; it was a videogame, fully approved by John Carpenter and set just hours after the events of the film's dramatic finale. You play as Blake, the captain of a rescue team sent to investigate the base. When you arrive you find a smoking ruin, a dead Childs and a solemn tape left by MacReady explaining what happened – but no MacReady.

Thing of beauty

What that made the film so brilliantly tense was the alien's ability to take the form of a human being without any outward signs of change. The scientists were constantly at each others' throats, unsure of who was a human and who was infected. This is recreated brilliantly by the game's unique trust system. At its core its a simple squad-based shooter, but as well as ordering your men about you have to keep an eye on their behaviour to gauge if they've been infected.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *The Thing*? Let us know:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

But the problem is, they get scared. So if one of your guys is acting strangely, it might just be simple fear. Or they might be infected by The Thing. It's tricky to tell, and if you wrongly accuse someone of being under the alien's influence the squad's trust in you will drop and they'll stop cooperating, even attacking you sometimes. The best way to find out if someone's infected is to perform a blood test. If you draw some blood with a syringe and it explodes and they mutate into a grotesque monster... well, they're infected. You can even perform

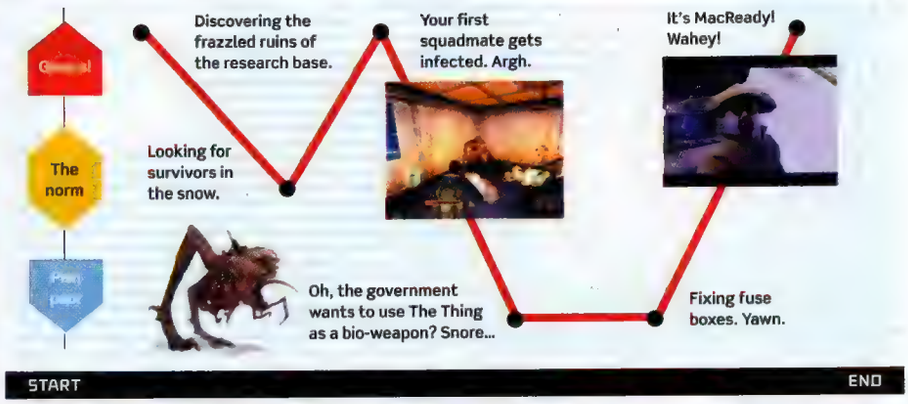
The defining moment...

The flamethrower

In the movie, MacReady and co used flamethrowers to destroy The Thing. Quite why a group of scientists in the Antarctic felt they needed flamethrowers is a mystery, but they certainly come in handy for toasting aliens. In the game they're the best weapon, and the flame effects look stunning. The only problem is, it's easy to accidentally singe your own squadmates - lowering their trust dramatically.

Crawl space It might look safe, but a cackling alien spider is probably hiding around the next corner.

The *Thing* thrill-o-graph


General
The norm
Paul Blart
Discovering the frazzled ruins of the research base.
Looking for survivors in the snow.
Your first squadmate gets infected. Argh.
Oh, the government wants to use The Thing as a bio-weapon? Snore...
It's MacReady! Wahey!
Fixing fuse boxes. Yawn.
START
END

Team player Your mates can use pretty much [illegible] in the game, including [illegible] flamethrowers.

a blood test on yourself in front of the squad to restore their faith in you.

You have to keep your guys on your side because without their individual skills, you won't be able to proceed. Engineers, for example, can repair damaged fuse boxes to open sealed doors. If your entire squad become infected, you'll meet up with others scattered throughout the base. The AI isn't perfect and they ocasionally blunder into danger, but you grow weirdly attached to them and feel genuinely upset when they cop it. Oh, and they vomit. Lots. Come across a corpse, a mutant or a big pile of severed limbs and they'll hunch over and sick their guts up.

It all goes a bit 'videogame' later when it turns out that your commander, Colonel Whitely, (voiced by the Cigarette Smoking Man from the X-Files) is actually there to recover a specimen of The Thing and bring it back to the US for research. There's even a scene where a special forces team is sent in to kill you – shamelessly 'borrowed' from *Half-Life*. But most of your time's spent wandering through the snow, jumping every time you hear a noise and watching your squadmates transform into Hellbeasts.

New look

The Thing works because, rather than clumsily recreate the events of the film, the developers approached the story from a new angle while still capturing the atmosphere that made the movie so eerie. Ennio Morricone's brooding soundtrack is faithfully aped, and the subdued colours and bleak atmosphere of the base are perfect.

At the end is one of the best game pay-offs of all time. We won't ruin it for you, but fans of the movie will love it.

Watch the film, then play this game – and wonder why other movie tie-ins can't be more like it.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Because, besides *Lego Star Wars*, there's barely been a movie game worth playing.
Final thought We want to see more digital sequels of classic films. It's a genius idea

The Top 5

The Thing facts

1 Series business
Director John Carpenter has stated that this game is part of the canon, and thus an official sequel to the film.

2 Spit it out
A song called After Me by dreadful 'nu-metal' band Saliva plays over the end credits, partially ruining the climax.

3 Art for art's sake
This was developer Computer Artworks' first PlayStation game and, sadly, their last. They also produced PC adventure *Evolva*, but now concentrate on high-end graphics for TV and film.

4 Doctor, doctor
John Carpenter also lent his likeness and voice to the character of Doctor Faraday.

5 Infection infestation
The game finally confirms that, at the end of the movie, MacReady and Childs weren't actually infected, contrary to popular fan opinion.

Portly CJ from GTA. It's like looking in a mirror

PLAYSTATION NATION

Games make you fat claims McBurger boss

You there – are you fat? Well, it's not because you live off nothing but Smarties and lard, or because the only exercise you get is ordering said Smarties and lard off the internet. No, it's because you play games. Who's come up with this revelation? Why, the chief executive of McDonald's UK, Steve Easterbrook, in a sweeping claim that evokes a grammatical rearrangement of 'pots', 'kettles' and the colour of Man Utd's away kit.

"The issue of obesity is complex," commented Steve Easterbrook. "There's a lifestyle element: there's fewer green spaces and kids are sat at home playing computer games on the TV when in the past they'd have been burning off energy outside."

We agree, to a point – if you just sit on your lard-plumped posterior playing games it's going to have an adverse effect on your waistline; however to islolate games as a major factor in obesity without considering, for instance, eating habits sounds *slightly* richer than, say, a Foie Gras McWhopper. Us? We're off to play *CoD4* while nibbling rice cakes and jogging on the spot.

We didn't buy this burger from the Golden Arches, by the way

"'In the past, kids would be burning energy outside'"

REPORTAGE

Teach me If Snake was your tutor, you'd *really* pay attention.

"Snake! *Snaaaaake*! I got a 2:1 in MGS2"

A man on the official PlayStation forums (boards.us.playstation.com) caused a bit of a stir recently. He started a new thread, saying "I'm a philosophy teacher in Texas and was greatly intrigued by *MGS2* after my students alerted me to it. I created a course in class where students can discuss it with each other." Irritatingly, he didn't name the university – possibly because it's a fake, as some have suggested – but his Wikipedia page on the philosophy of *MGS2* is exhaustive – to put it mildly.

There's debate on the role of absolute truth (the GW computer in Arsenal Gear) versus the 'contrived' truth of humanity. There's discussion on how the idea of the freedom of information and whether its possible to censor elements of the past to allow the next generation to mould a different future for itself – stemming from Snake's statement that "Building the future and keeping the past alive are the same thing." And there's loads more. Check it out at http://tinyurl.com/2eok25. Those off to uni this year should start researching Texan establishments now.

Pass mates Finish *MGS2*, get a rubbish degree, join the dole queue. That's the life for us.

RAWWK

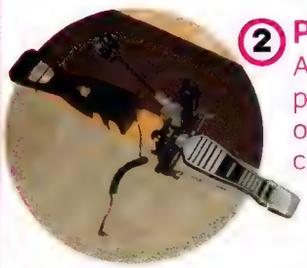
Rock Band community goes modding mad

That *Rock Band* is becoming a phenomenon, even before its European launch, is undeniable. All over the States people are taking their new band kits home, forming their own rock supergroups and having a damn good time.

But, as happened with *Guitar Hero*, creative types aren't quite satisfied with the vanilla set-up they've paid for, and have gone to work stamping their own individual mark on their geetar and drums. Here's just a small sample of some of the different mods people have created. And when the game finally hits Europe – sometime in March, we hope – we're betting on this stream of mods to become a sodding great waterfall of the things. Expect an update, detailing some even more brilliant modernisations, in a future issue.

1 New drum skins

As happened when *Guitar Hero* first launched, people have been beavering away, but this time they've got drums to customise as well. These skull-motif bangers, up on eBay for $30, are our faves – and they also quieten the massive whacking sound you get when you play.

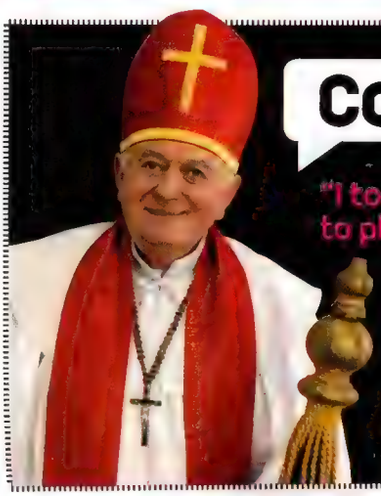


2 Proper drum pedal

A real drummer will tell you that the pedal that comes with *Rock Band* is a bit on the flimsy side – so check out tinyurl.com/2zrczg for details on how to mod a real drum pedal to work with the game. Warning: requires DIY skills.

3 Use a real guitar

Not so much a mod this as a proper piece of technology. The Ediface, available in the near future from SoundTech, lets you play real guitar. Stick it into your PS3, program in which *Rock Band* (or even *GH*) notes you want on each string and you're away. In a word: amazing.



Confess!

"I took a week off sick to play *Oblivion*"

By: Mark Smith, London

EMAIL PSM3 @
Got a confession? Then we'll print it! Email us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Tell us thy sin...
Last summer, I bought myself a new PS3 and a copy of *Oblivion* to play.

What's wrong with that?
Hold your horses, padre, I haven't finished yet. This was on a Saturday. I unpacked my new kit, and settled down with *Oblivion*.

What then?
Well, then I realised just how massive it truly is. I played it all weekend, and by Sunday night I still felt like I'd barely scratched the surface. But I was loving every minute.

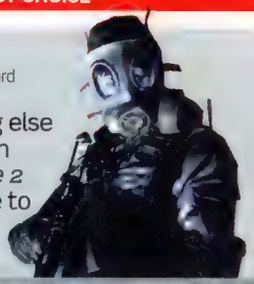
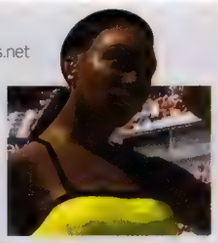
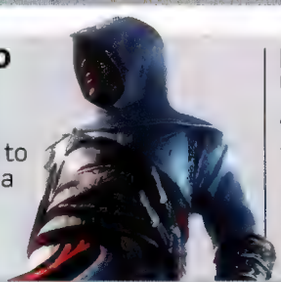
So you got up Monday morning and went to work, right? *Right?*
Not exactly, no. I rang my boss and pretended to have the flu. A few fake coughs and sneezes, and I was free to explore Cyrodiil some more. And off I went to do just that.

Back in work Tuesday though, yes?
Nope. Nor Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. I literally spent the entire week glued to the screen slaying warriors, ransacking forts, training to be a thief, creating potions and just exploring the incredible, massive landscape.

You workshy fop.
And I got a promotion in work the next week. Hah.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS3 reviews section for the latest games

PS3 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS	**CALL OF DUTY 4** **Pub** Activision | **Dev** Infinity Ward **Web** callofduty.com "It makes everything else on PS3 look foolish in comparison. *Killzone 2* will have to go some to follow this." **PSM3 Rating** 94% 	**HALF-LIFE 2: THE ORANGE BOX** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Valve | **Web** half-life2.com "Five ace games in one box – a bumper pack the likes of which you've never seen. It's a must-play, undeniably." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 	**RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Insomniac **Web** us.playstation.com "An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff." **PSM3 Rating** 89%
DRIVING/RACING	**BURNOUT PARADISE** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Criterion | **Web** burnout.ea.com "Sucks you in and takes over your world. Flawed in structure, but oozes confidence. Paradise? Almost." **PSM3 Rating** 89% 	**MOTORSTORM** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Evolution **Web** motorstorm.com "Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises." **PSM3 Rating** 88% 	**COLIN MCRAE: DIRT** **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters **Web** codemasters.com/dirt "Has improvements over the Xbox 360 game, and as a single-player experience *DiRT* is nothing short of brilliant." **PSM3 Rating** 88%
SPORTS	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** pesfan.com "The first thing you'll notice is the slowdown, but it's still the best football game. Just don't expect too much." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 	**VIRTUA TENNIS 3** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Sega | **Web** virtuatennis.net "No massive departure, but there's enough new tweaks and content to tempt veterans as well as newcomers." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 	**EVERYBODY'S Ggolf 5** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Clap Hanz | **Web** everybodysgolfclub.com "Enjoyable, uncomplicated and lovelier than a kitten in a bib, this is a great alternative to *Tiger*." **PSM3 Rating** 81%
ACTION	**UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Naughty Dog | **Web** us.playstation.com "Moments of stunning beauty interrupted with cinematic action. If you buy this, you'll love it – it's unforgettable." **PSM3 Rating** 89% 	**ASSASSIN'S CREED** **Pub** Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft **Web** assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com "Every city is full of rooftops and minarets to clamber about on, like a massive adventure playground." **PSM3 Rating** 81% 	**DEVIL MAY CRY 4** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** devilmaycry.com "Most games give you a fighting chance. *DMC4* is *not* like that. There are bits you'll absolutely love, and bits you'll hate." **PSM3 Rating** 80%

Out now on Blu-ray Movies for your PS3

APOCALYPTIC

The Day After Tomorrow

Stars Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal
Web foxhome.com
Ah, nice. Were hi-def viewing invented for one specific movie, it'd be this one – massive floods and storms in ultra-clear vision. Smart. The film itself isn't great and there are few extras, but check out that high definition lightning. Mmm.

NAVAL

Master And Commander

Stars Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany
Web masterandcommander.com
It's Russell Crowe, on a big boat, wearing a slightly stupid jacket. A decent enough flick, with some nice Blu-ray extras, including commentaries and a pop-up map to teach you all about the movie's locations. Educational.

DAMP

Dark Water

Stars Jennifer Connelly, Tim Roth
Web darkwater.movies.go.com
Inspired by The Ring, which was about a small girl trapped in a well, this is another US remake of a Japanese horror – about a small girl trapped in a water tank. Hmm. It's pretty chilling, but there are practically no Blu-ray extras. How very disappointing.

Disagree with our scores? Mail your angry rants or alternative scores and Top Tens to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 Top Ten!"

Back Issues
Complete your collection!
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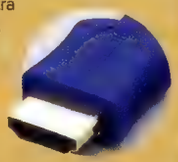
PS3 For Beginners

How to PS3? Read this now

Composite? SCART? HDMI? I'm confused... do I need an expensive TV?
Yes. Anyone running PS3 through a standard def (i.e. old) TV is missing out on just how good games can look. You need a good 16:9 (i.e. widescreen) TV with an HDMI input. That's better than any kind of composite and SCART connection. If it's running at least 1080i/720p, that means that the TV is officially 'hi-def'. PS3 *can* output up to 1080p resolution (i.e. show even more pixels), so you could shell out the extra for a TV that can handle it, but only a few games use 1080p and you can't see the difference unless you set two TVs side by side.



Why is Blu-ray so good?
Blu-ray is the best reason to spring for that 1080p set. All Blu-ray movies play at 1080p – the highest resolution you can get. Do you *need* Blu-ray? That's debatable now that PS3 can 'upscale' (i.e. run at hi-res) your old DVDs. Many 'old' DVDs that were well recorded look superb on PS3, meaning that re-buying your old movies on Blu-ray is a massive waste of cash. Still, in side-by-side comparisons Blu-ray does look sharper than DVD.

How do I connect to the net?
Simply select 'yes' to everything in your Internet Connection (under 'Settings') and PS3 should find the net and be up and running. Any problems, just phone your internet service provider and tell them you've got a PS3 – you'll need to know the primary and secondary DNS numbers they use. Choose 'Manual' rather than 'Auto' and tap these into the settings.

How do I add Friends?
Like any good party, the trick is being invited. Your PS Network ID is the key here. Tell this to a friend and they can send you a Friend Request message from their PS3. The friend request will then appear on your PS3. Simply say 'Yes' and both of you will have icons for each other on your machines. Now sending a message is just a click away, as is the ability to see when their PS3 is switched on and what they're playing.

How do I download stuff from the store?
The PS Store is in your PS3's Network menu. Select this for many free and reasonably priced downloads. We find the best way to keep abreast of what's hot is to check the 'Recent Additions' and 'Top Downloads' charts on the right of the front page. Simply click on them to start the download. Then choose 'Perform In Background' to do other things on your PS3 while they download. Sadly you can't yet play movies or games while downloading, but you can still surf the net without pausing the process.

How do I play music and video on my PS3?
All music and video appears on the Music and Video menus. Simple. Insert a CD and you can rip it to your hard drive from the Music menu. Video is slightly tougher – but the recent firmware 2.10 update (featuring DivX support) has improved things. Movies no longer have to be in MP4 format, since most .avi and .wmv files now play too. Handy, since they're the most popular types of video files on the net.

High Definition TVs

Updated: the best TVs for PS3 gaming – to suit any budget

£400 - £700

Sony KDL-20S3020

A touch over 400 quid (£445, to be exact) is a very fair price indeed for a more than decent 20-inch telly. It might not be the biggest, but it packs a punch technically, and even features that all-important HDMI socket.
Also recommended: 32" Evesham ALQEMI 32SX, £600), 20" Philips 20PF5320D (£500).

£700 - £1000

JVC LT-32DA8BJ

An excellent-value mid-range TV, this. Integrated TV receiver, HDMI ports, two SCART sockets and 3D cinema sound all contribute to making this a box you can be proud of having in the corner of your living room. £700 for a 32-inch TV can't be bad. And it'll be cheaper online.
Also recommended: Panasonic Viera TX-32LXD700 (£650), 32" Toshiba 32WLT68 (£700).

£1000 - £2000

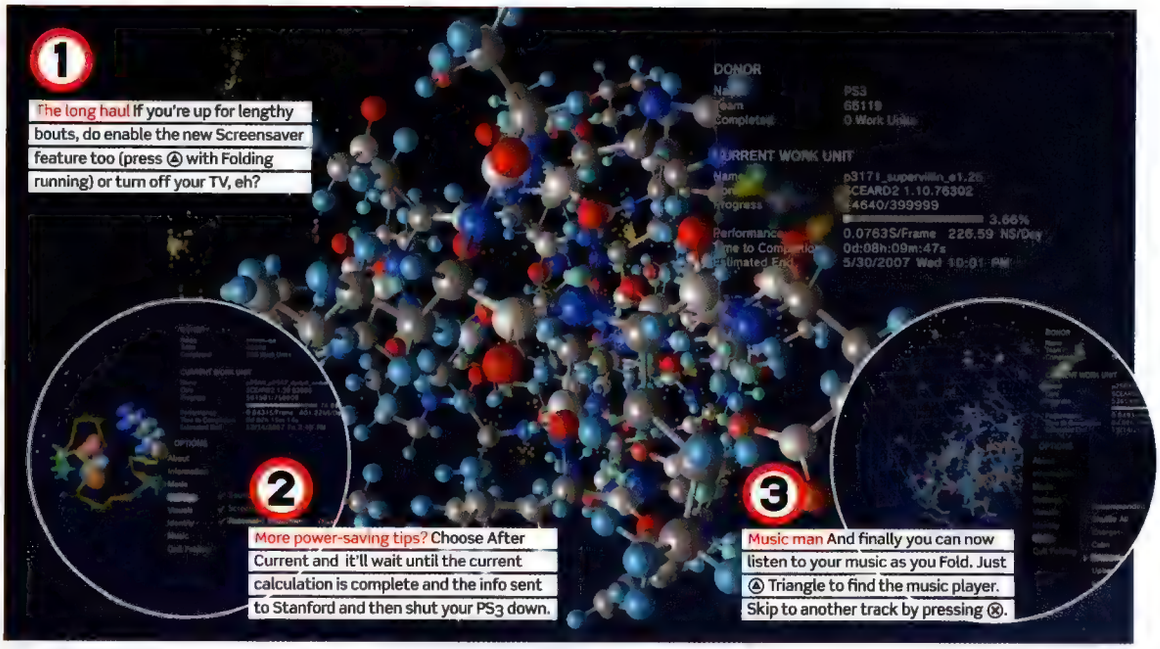
Samsung LE46F86BDX

A £1500 1080p LCD that out-performs its equivalent plasma rivals, using Samsung's DNIe processing for rich blacks and fine detail with 100Hz processing to minimise blur from fast moving images. It's got three HDMI slots and Colour Enhancer too.
Also recommended: 42" Sharp Aquos (£1,900), 47" Toshiba 47WLT66 (£1,900).

@ Tech-tips Send us your tech questions and tips. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Tech Tips!"

Inside XMB: Folding@home

Exploring Folding's latest features


1
The long haul If you're up for lengthy bouts, do enable the new Screensaver feature too (press △ with Folding running) or turn off your TV, eh?
DONOR
CURRENT WORK UNIT
2
More power-saving tips? Choose After Current and it'll wait until the current calculation is complete and the info sent to Stanford and then shut your PS3 down.
3
Music man And finally you can now listen to your music as you Fold. Just △ Triangle to find the music player. Skip to another track by pressing ⊗.

Chances are you may have dabbled with PS3's Folding@home feature but – thanks to recent updates and tweaks – this potentially life-saving utility is more hypnotic than ever.

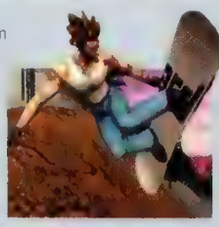
What is Folding? Well it's an online utility that plugs your PS3 into the computer at America's Stanford University. Your PS3 downloads complex cell simulations and works on them before belching its findings back to Stanford. The more PS3's hooked up the faster the trillions of calculations are done and the sooner Stanford finds a cure to diseases like Alzheimer's and even cancer.

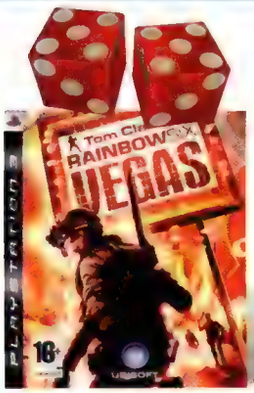
Head to Network and select Folding@home. That's it. You can sit back and let the PS3 do its thing or thanks to new features you can play with the results as their generated.

Highlight Folding@home in the menu, hit △ and choose Auto Start. You can now set your PS3 to begin Folding when it's sat doing nothing. Running Folding uses the same electricity as leaving a light bulb on. It's also very efficient as regards data downloads – typically your PS3 will only exchange less than 10Mb two or three times a day. Now go and save some lives.

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PS2 games rated? Go here

PS2 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
SURVIVAL HORROR	**RESIDENT EVIL 4** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** capcom.com/resevil4 "Every second of play feels polished to perfection, like a game that's been playtested for hours on end." **PSM3 Rating** 97% 	**THE SILENT HILL COLLECTION** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami **Web** silenthillheaven.com "Hours of quality adventuring and, if you're after scares, there's nothing else quite like it." **PSM3 Rating** 89% 	**COLD FEAR** **Pub** Ubisoft | **Dev** Darkworks **Web** coldfeargame.com "Waves tear over the side of the zombie-strewn ship, splattering the camera. It looks magnificent." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
FOOTBALL	**HM: IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE** **Pub** 505 Game Street | **Dev** Marvelous | **Web** hmfarm.com "When you settle into marital bliss, with your farm evolving, you'll see how lovely life is." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 	**WE LOVE KATAMARI** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Namco | **Web** katamari.namco.com "Roll up everything from paper clips to massive islands in an original game that's as crazy as it is addictive. Great." **PSM3 Rating** 82% 	**KILLER7** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** killer-7.com "Experimental types will appreciate its charms. Others might not be able to stomach the madness." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
ONLINE	**METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami **Web** konami.com "One of the best games ever, with excellent online options. Go get it." **PSM3 Rating** 93% 	**SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS** **Pub** SCEA | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom2.playstation.com "*SOCOM 2* is immersive, dramatic, exciting, detailed and absolutely worth hooking up to broadband for." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** pesfan.com "Eminently playable, ridiculously detailed, horribly addictive, and even better than the real thing." **PSM3 Rating** 93%
EXTREME SPORTS	**SSX TRICKY** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** easportsbig..com "Edgy, funky, cool with outrageously compulsive gameplay and riotous effects. On the verge of perfection." **PSM3 Rating** 95% 	**TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3** **Pub** Activision | **Dev** Neversoft | **Web** planettonyhawk.com "The greatest skater on PS2. Urban and instantly accessible, sparking online play and a pile of staggering surprises." **PSM3 Rating** 96% 	**SSX 3** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA **Web** easportsbig.com "A gleeful kinetic rush, twinning ace controls to excellent graphics." **PSM3 Rating** 94%



Bet on black Three games that take you down the casino

TERRORISM

Rainbow Six Vegas

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Web rainboxsixgame.uk.ubi.com
Terrorists take Vegas, and the Rainbow Six boys put a stop to them by killing them to bits. Taking cover behind fruit machines is fun, but you never get to gamble all your guns away on a hand of blackjack.
PSM3 Rating 76%

MARTINIS

GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

Pub EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** ea.com
James Bond is to casinos what vinegar is to chips; a natural fit. Rogue Agent takes El Bondo to a gambling palace – Midas Casino, to be precise – where, naturally, he shoots everyone dead. No actual betting here either, mind.
PSM3 Rating 58%

SHEIKHS

Hitman: Blood Money

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Io Interactive
Web hitmanbloodmoney.com
Agent 47 goes to Vegas, where he stays at the plush Shamal Hotel and Casino, before murderising a sheikh by disguising himself as one of his contacts and handing him a briefcase with a bomb in it. Bang! Still no real gambling – pah.
PSM3 Rating 93%

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it. Nobody bought it. We explain

Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil

Pub Namco | **Dev** Namco | **Web** us.playstation.com

2D gaming died a premature death pretty much the very instant it became possible to create decent 3D worlds. Platformers were hardest hit by the dimensional shift, and haven't been afforded much in the way of love and hugs by the gaming public since. So *Klonoa 2* – a 2D jump-'em-up disguised with pseudo-3D environments (think *Sonic Rivals*, but, well, good) wasn't exactly the sort of thing early PS2 adopters were after.

A shame really, because as well as looking cracking – all big, bold primary colours and chunky, loveable Japanese cartoon animals – *Klonoa 2* was a pretty great game. It's far from revolutionary, but it was a quick, fast, slick and undeniably fun reaction-testing outing; much like the also-overlooked first game on PSone.

Where this game departed from the prequel, however, was in the use of puzzles, some of which were harder than a box of rottweilers, and into-the-screen chase bits, which added some extra adrenaline to the whole affair. Even if they were a bit awkward to actually play.

But in a new world of 3D exploration, people wouldn't give an obscure 2D Japanese platformer their time. And the choice of environments – ice? Water? Funfair? – hardly screamed 'imaginative' to those that did. Look beyond that, though, and there's a cracking game here. Seek it out.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	(01)	Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft	Reviewed PSM95 81%
02	(03)	Call Of Duty 4	Activision	Reviewed PSM95 94%
03	NEW	Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	Sony	Reviewed PSM96 89%
04	(05)	FIFA 08	EA	Reviewed PSM94 63%
05	(06)	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Konami	Reviewed PSM93 86%
06	(02)	Need For Speed ProStreet	EA	Reviewed PSM95 79%
07	(04)	Kane & Lynch	Eidos	Reviewed PSM95 58%
08	NEW	Medal Of Honor: Airborne	EA	Reviewed PSM66 69%
09	(07)	Smackdown 2008	THQ	Reviewed PSM94 79%
10	(10)	Guitar Hero 3	Activision	Reviewed PSM95 90%
11	(08)	Ratchet: Tools Of Destruction	Sony	Reviewed PSM93 93%
12	(18)	Sega Rally	Sega	Reviewed PSM93 79%
13	NEW	SingStar	Sony	Reviewed PSM93 81%
14	(09)	The Simpsons Game	EA	Reviewed PSM95 70%
15	(11)	Tiger Woods 08	EA	Reviewed PSM93 68%
16	NEW	Half-Life 2: The Orange Box		Reviewed PSM96 90%
17	(12)	Stranglehold	Midway	Reviewed PSM93 78%
18	NEW	TimeShift	Sierra	Reviewed PSM96 72%
19	RE	Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Activision	Reviewed PSM94 85%
20	(13)	Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	Lucasarts	Reviewed PSM95 80%

Want it? Tick it!

Charting a course for success

A good showing for *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, one of the games that's really made people sit up and take notice of PS3. Do buy it, it's terrific.

Airborne to be wild

It's *Medal Of Honor: Airborne*, the nowhere-near-as-good-as-*CoD4* war shooter. Delayed for weeks, it's still managing to shift copies. For some reason.

Orange doesn't bear fruit

The greatest-value package on PS3, this, so it's a little bit of a shame it's not riding higher. Five great games for the price of one? You know what to do...

1,200,000

The number of PS3s sold in Britain between November 23 to December 31.

You're playing...

Wayne Andrew
A wide variety of different genres for our Wayne...

1 **Disgaea** "You can build an army of up to 200 to fight for you so you can create different squads."
2 **Uncharted** "What PS3 has been waiting for. Only 15 hours or so long, but many reasons to replay."
3 **Warhawk** "Anyone with a PS3 and online connection that doesn't own this game is insane."

We're playing...

Milford Coppock
There's a peculiar side to our Milf, there really is...

1 **Call Of Duty 4** "I've yet to tire of sniping people between the eyeballs. In real life, too."
2 **Pro Evo 2008** "Maddening, frustrating, but still beautiful. But enough about me..."
3 **Uncharted** "I, like all of PSM3, never tire of Drake's wet shirt clinging to his pecs. Mmm, *baby*."

They're playing...

Randy Pitchford
Brothers In Arms man makes '80s reference we don't get either.

1 **Rock Band** "My house feels like the Partridge Family now. I'm Danny Bonaduce. Heh."
2 **Pain** "Who could imagine *Pain* would be so pleasurable?"
3 **Final Fantasy Tactics** "I'm a sucker for tactics/strategy games like this, and it's devoured my life."

ON THE DISC
See what PSP games are coming your way
PSP/LATEST

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
ACTION	**GTA: VICE CITY STORIES** **Pub** Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar | **Web** gtapsp..com "The miracle of playing such a big game on PSP makes *VCS* pretty special. The system's best yet." **PSM3 Rating** 91% 72%	**GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES** **Pub** Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar | **Web** gtapsp..com "Forehead-poppingly frustrating at times, *Liberty City Stories* is still a colossal beaut of a game." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 82%	**SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** SCEA | **Web** playstation.com "*Dark Mirror* lets you attack missions and enemy grunts in a way that suits your style – which makes it fun." **PSM3 Rating** 88% 75% 85% 77%
BEAT-'EM-UPS	**TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Namco **Web** tekken.net "Grabs you and doesn't let go. This is how all handheld scrapping should be. An essential buy, really." **PSM3 Rating** 89% 71%	**POWER STONE COLLECTION** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** capcom.com "Slaps a broad smile on your face. Perfectly suited to handheld play and will brighten up anyone's day." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 74% 84%	**DEF JAM: THE TAKEOVER** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** ea.com "Where other fighting games feel floaty, every punch and stomp carries weight. Brutal." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 85% 77%
WI-FI	**VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital **Web** sega.com "*Virtua Tennis* experts will demolish you with shots you wouldn't believe, leaving you swearing like McEnroe." **PSM3 Rating** 91% 84%	**BURNOUT LEGENDS** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Team Fusion **Web** ea.com "If you want a fast, fun racer with great online play, then this is it. It's got loads to do." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 82% 81%	**SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com "An awesome online mode lets you boss the virtual war zone with a group of your mates. Terrific, really." **PSM3 Rating** 83% 84% 80% 93%
PUZZLERS	**LOCOROCO** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** SCEI | **Web** locoroco.com "Guide your grinning sphere through various lands. Odd, entertaining and the happiest game there is on PSP." **PSM3 Rating** 93% 84% 79%	**LUMINES 2** **Pub** Buena Vista | **Dev** Q | **Web** luminesthegame.com "Games like this are what your PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for ages. Just great." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 78% 78% 77%	**CRUSH** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Kuju | **Web** sega.com "At any moment, you can crush the game into 2D. Dozens of configurations to be packed together." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 85% 82% 70%

Tactical thinking Some of PlayStation's top tactics-'em-ups

SO-SO

Future Tactics: The Uprising

Pub Jo Wood | **Dev** Zed Two
Web jowood.com

Cartoon-style tactical warfare, complete with RPG-type levelling up and even first-person shooting bits. Something for everyone, then, but as with most jacks of all trades, it's a master of none.

PSM3 Rating 64%

FRENCH

La Pucelle Tactics

Pub Mastiff | **Dev** Nippon Ichi
Web lapucelletactics.com

Imagine something like *Disgaea*, but *even more* impenetrable and confusing. If that doesn't get you running for the hills then congratulations; *La Pucelle Tactics* is an underappreciated treat. Note: 'La Pucelle' is French for 'The Virgin'.

PSM3 Rating 80%

ABSORBING

Final Fantasy Tactics: War Of The Lions

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Square Enix
Web square-enix-usa.com

Another ultra-hardcore strategy game, this time set within the confines of the *Final Fantasy* universe. A bit slow-moving to begin with, but once you're hooked *Final Fantasy Tactics* will take over your life for months.

PSM3 Rating 89%

Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

Nice Apps

Trick up your console

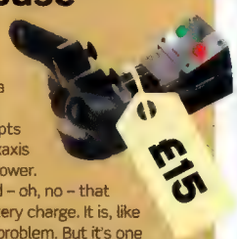
Pak it in

App PSP Mega 'Pak'
Web madcatz.com

It's a huge bundle of different peripherals for your PSP – or a 'Mega Pak' as Madcatz are insistent on calling it. 'Pak', indeed. Anyway, you'll be getting quite a lot for your cash – there's a USB cable, some new headphones, a screen protector, four PSP game cases, a car adaptor for M1-based gaming, a cleaning cloth (wowzers), a carry case and, finally, a component cable that lets you play your PSP games on your telly. So it's everything a PSP owner needs, along with some stuff they don't. And if that's not value for money, we don't really know what is.

Ace of base

App Nyko charge base
Web nyko.com



We've all been there. You're in the middle of a frenzied *CoD4* firefight when the game interrupts to tell you that your Sixaxis is about to run out of power. So you switch pads and – oh, no – that one's also short of battery charge. It is, like a dirty rash, a growing problem. But it's one you can resolve with the Nyko Charge Base 2, which lets you charge up two Sixaxises (Sixaxi?) or DualShock 3s at once. It plugs into the power outlet in the wall rather than your PS3 and, well, it's bloody ugly. A useful little device, though, so you might want to go and get one in.

Stand up straight

App Joystick for flight sims
Web thrustmaster.com

Do you play all those amazing PS3 flight sims like, erm, *Blazing Angels* a lot? Then the T Flight Stick X might be handy. It's a joystick just for flight sims – you've probably seen PC spods use them for Microsoft Flight Simulator. And here's one for PS3, with 'resistance control', mappable buttons and all that jazz. Nice, but pointless until PS3 gets more plane games.

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule*

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	Want it? Tick it!
Conflict: Denied Ops	Eidos	Feb 15	PS3	☐
Castlevania: Dracula X Chronicles	Konami	Feb 15	PSP	☐
FIFA Street 3	EA	Feb 22	PS3	☐
Wild Arms 5	505 Games	Feb 22	PS2	☐
Unreal Tournament 3	Midway	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Lost	Ubisoft	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	Capcom	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	Codemasters	Feb 29	PS3	☐
NFL Tour	EA	Feb	PS2	☐
Army Of Two	EA	March 7	PS3	☐
MX Vs ATV Untamed	THQ	March 7	PS3	☐
Viking: Battle For Asgard	Sega	March 7	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	March 14	PS3	☐
Alone In The Dark	Atari	March 21	PS3	☐
Mercenaries 2	EA	March 28	PS3	☐
Sega Superstars Tennis	Sega	March 28	PS2	☐
Condemned 2	Sega	March 28	PS3	☐
Battlefield: Bad Company		March		☐
Blacksite: Area 51	Midway	March	PS3	☐
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	Sony	March	PS3	☐
Midnight Club LA	Rockstar	March	PS3	☐
Rock Band	EA	March	PS3	☐
Golden Axe	Sega	March	PS3	☐
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	Sony	March	PSP	☐
Grand Theft Auto 4	Rockstar	April 29	PS3	☐
UEFA Euro 2008	EA	April	PS3	☐
TNA Impact	Midway	May 2	PS3	☐
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Activision Blizzard	May	PS3	☐
Bionic Commando	Capcom	May	PS3	☐
Iron Man		May	PS3	☐
Wet	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Prototype	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Lego Batman	Warner Bros	July	PS3	☐
Tomb Raider Underworld	Eidos	Summer	PS3	☐
Lego Indiana Jones	Lucasarts	Summer	PS3	☐
Metal Gear Solid 4	Konami	Summer	PS3	☐
Tekken 6	Sony	Summer	PS3	☐
LittleBigPlanet	Sony	September	PS3	☐
Haze	Ubisoft	TBC	PS3	☐
Killzone 2	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐

*Caution: all dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change

FIFA Street 3

It's time for you to point and laugh at Peter Crouch's bendy frame. We're still amazed at his inclusion in EA's 'coolest' franchise. Peter Crouch is *not* cool.

Battlefield: Bad Company

Whether it can topple *CoD4* as 'best online war game' remains to be seen, but we've still massive hopes for this one. More very soon.

Iron Man

We're hoping to be pleasantly surprised by Sega's free-roaming flying billionaire in a robot suit-'em-up – hands-on details when we can bring you them.

eBay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

Assassin's Creed hoodie

Yes, it's an *Assassin's Creed* hooded top. Perhaps if you stalk about rooftops with the hood up, brooding enigmatically, you'll feel like Altair. Don't go stabbing people in the neck, mind. OK, it's slightly naff, but it's a million times better than the *Railroad Tycoon* hoodie one of Team PSM3 used to own...

Sold $16.50 **Original Price** $9.90
Profit $6.60

Shadow basketball

Imagine if you lived in a deprived area of the States, and your only form of recreation was street basketball. And imagine if, one day, you invited a mate along, and he turned up with this Shadow the bloody Hedgehog ball. You'd never speak to him again. This is, without doubt, one of the worst uses of game imagery we've ever seen. Ever.

Sold $4.99 **Original Price** $4.99
Profit None

'96 *Virtua Fighter* Calendar

Track the year (of 1996) with pics of the *VF* gang for company. Lion Rafale relaxes on a park bench. Jeffry McWild wrestles a shark. Pai Chan coquettishly licks at an ice cream. Shun Di lies back in a boat with some *massive* seagulls for company. Sarah Bryant sunbathes on the beach in her pants. And Lau Chan hurls himself off a cliff, for some reason.

Sold $59.00 **Original Price** $59.00
Profit None

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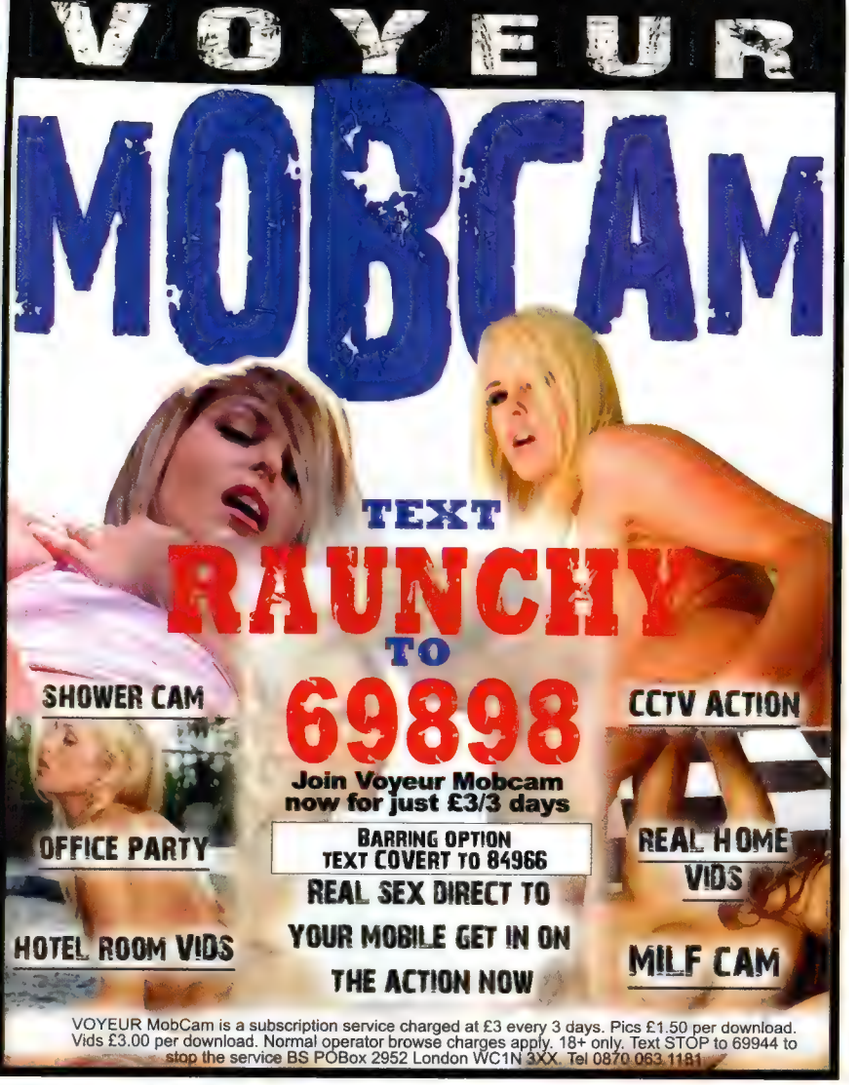

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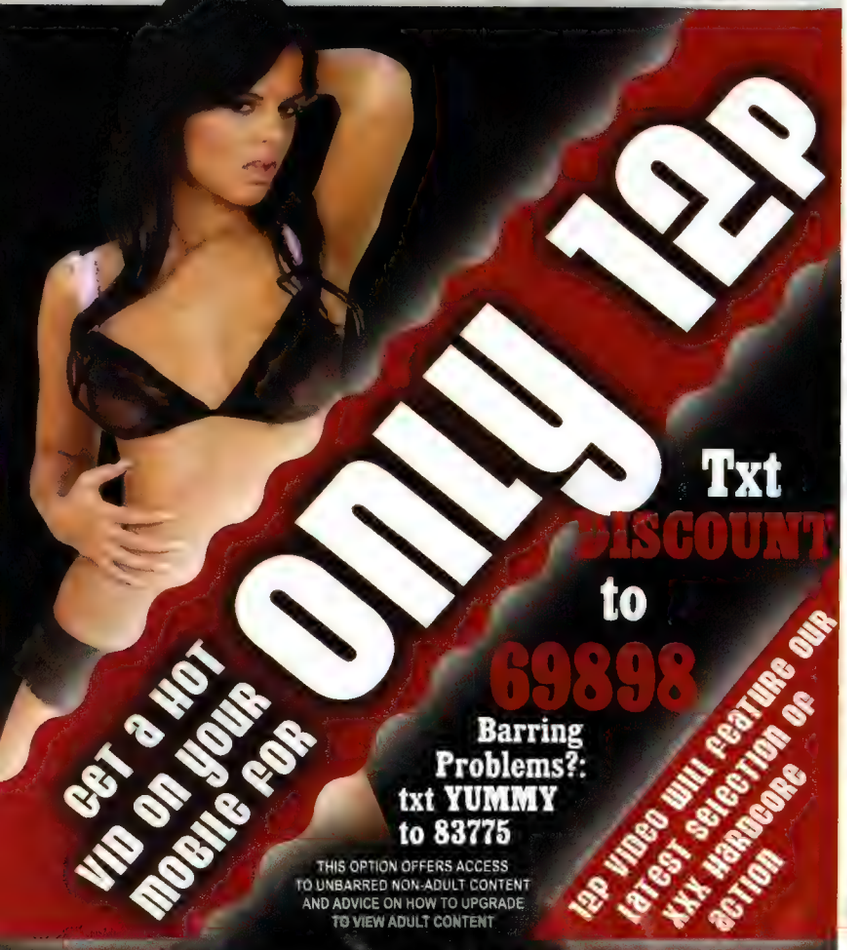
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5 things to remember this month

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Darth Vader + Soul Calibur = WTF
"The series has gone in for some lunatic cameos, but this is the weirdest yet"
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"Imagine *Vice City* without its excellent licensed tunes..."
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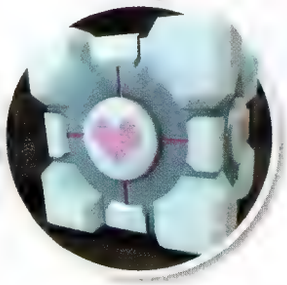

Loving a giant cube is quite normal
"It takes a special game to make you fall for a grey box"
page 84

Out-guitaring Satan feels *good*
"It's time for a victory solo to pound the demon into submission"
page 90

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The Call Of Duty 4 perks that never were

Exclusive! Top secret Infinity Ward notes reveal multi-player perks that never made it into the final game*

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HAPPY CAMPER

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WINDY POPS

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BADYEAR BLIMP

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DISTRACTION

When other players get you in their sights, you turn into one of ten distractions – including a child, a kitten and a dazzlingly realistic naked lady with physics-enabled breasts.

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

Your gun is replaced by a giant '80s-style boom box. Fire soundwaves at enemies to make them dance uncontrollably, then bludgeon them to death with it.

* Not really, legal fans. We made them up for 'laughs'.

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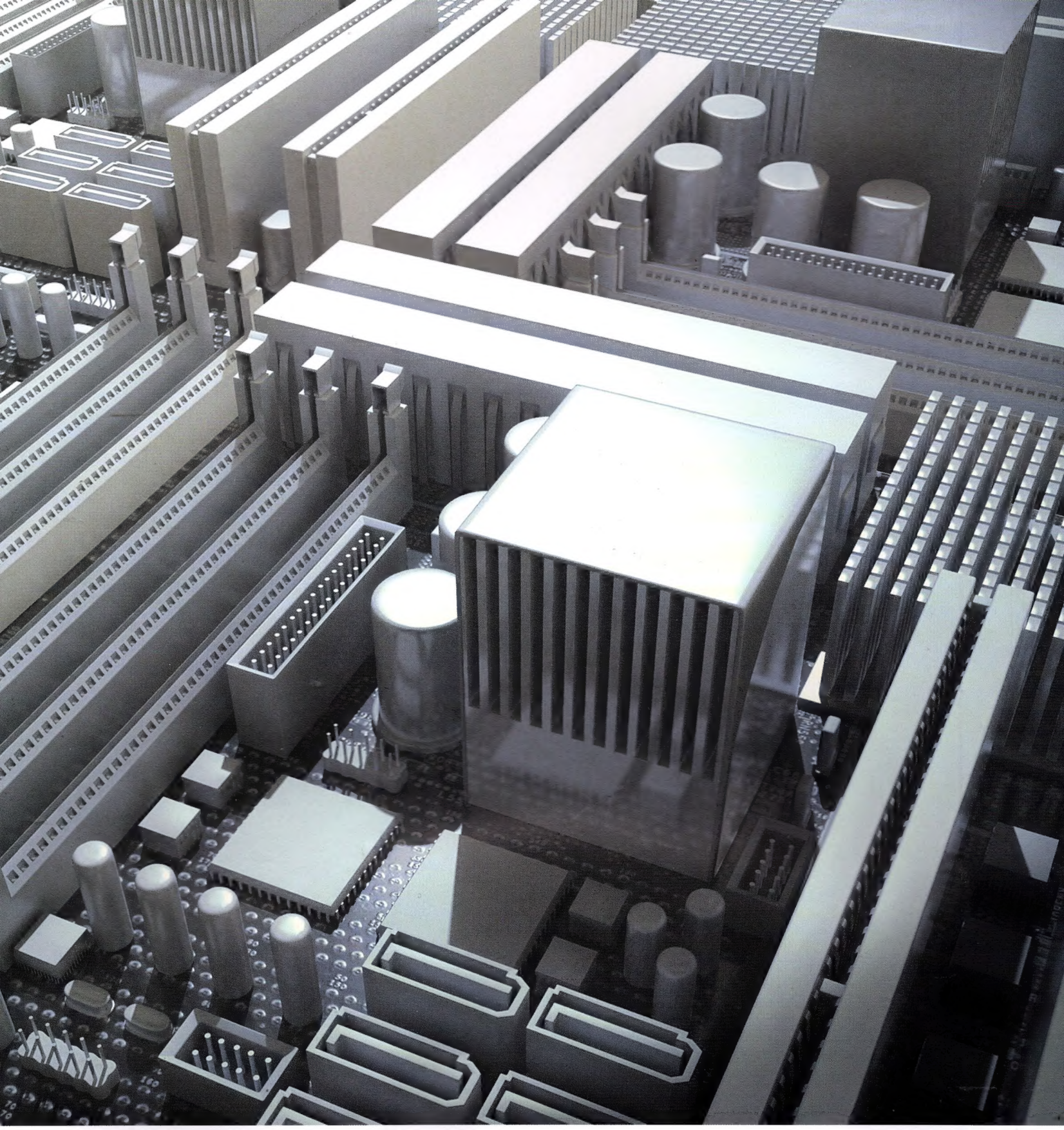

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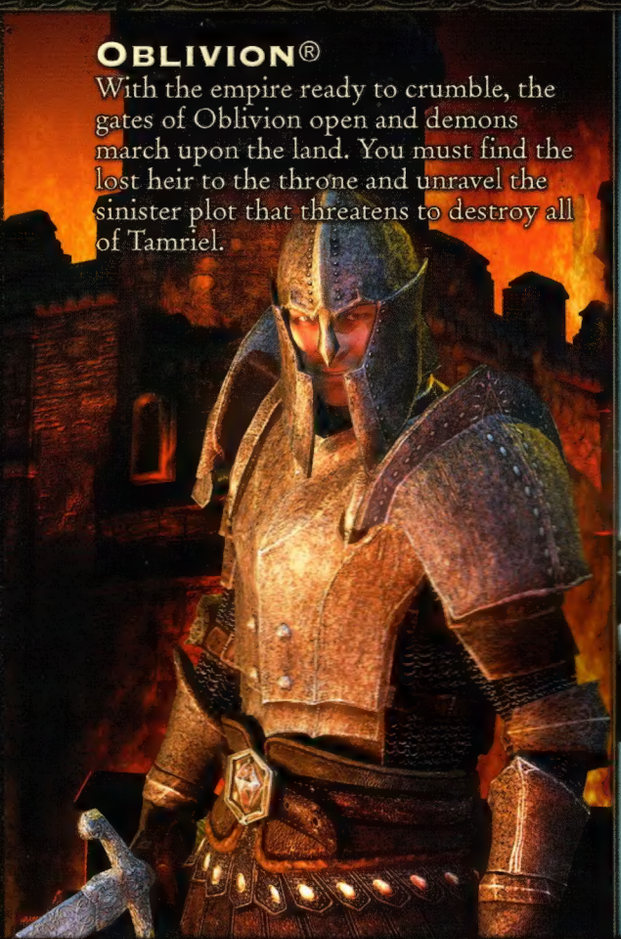

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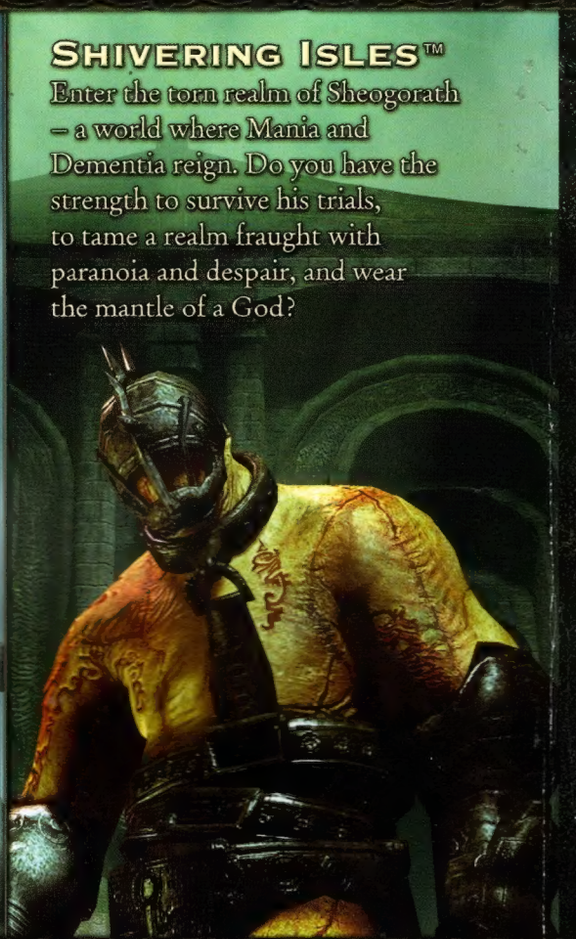

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